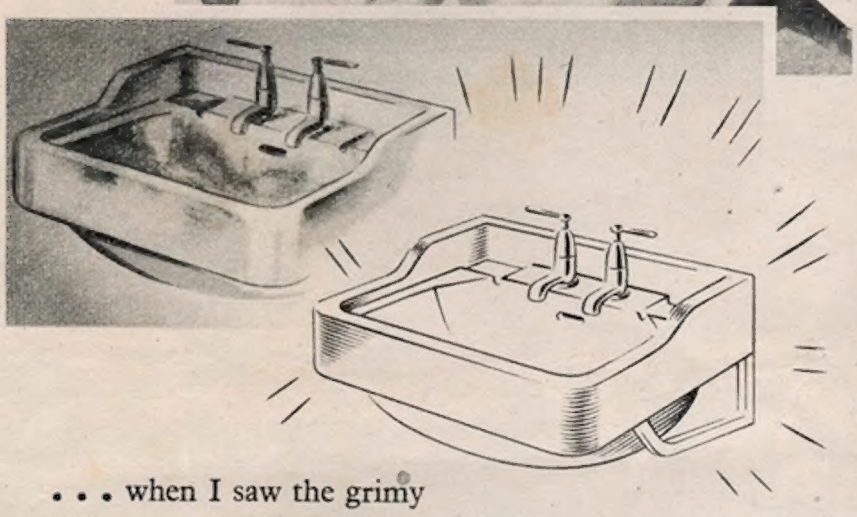
Week ending September 15 1951 Every Wednesday Fourpence

John Bull

BROADWAY SENDS ITS BEST-LOVED STAR
by GEOFFREY BOCCA

A SAVOY CHEF'S WAY WITH RATIONS
by JEAN NICOL



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SOMBRE SCHOOLMASTER TAKES 'REGULAR' LESSONS

Poor Old Blodge-Duff, the chemistry master! No wonder the Lower Fifth call him "The Stinker"—his very language is enough to turn pink litmus-paper blue. "How's the form?" I chaffed him.

"*Ill-disciplined and recalcitrant,*" *snapped B-D, "and so is my system. Since I started with this constipation I've had no interest in teaching. I loathe every test-tube.*"

"With tubes like yours I'm not surprised," I said.

"*What?*" *shouted B-D.*

"Sir," I faltered, "you have 30 feet of tube inside your tuck-box—and every bite you eat has to work its way through it. The trouble is that, if you eat a lot of soft, starchy foods, your intestinal muscles have nothing to pull on, and they won't work properly."

"*Sounds like that block, Smith Minor,*" *growled B-D.*

"A block is what *occurs*," I said. "That's what causes constipation and makes life look blacker than your gown. What you need," I ordered, "is more *bulk* in your diet. Write out a hundred times 'I need All-Bran'."

"*But that's a breakfast food,*" *quibbled B-D.*

"Ah yes," I said, "and most delectable. But All-Bran is also a bulk food to keep your bowel muscles at work, and make you 'regular'."

"*I'll remember the formula,*" *said B-D.*

And did he? Well, the next time I met him, he looked as if he'd decided his schooldays were the happiest years of his life, so I said, "All-Bran worked, eh?"

"*Emphatically!*" *carolled B-D.* "*It made me 'regular' in less than a week. It's great stuff.*"

"Top of the class," I said.

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EDITORIAL

"Get growing"—to get more bacon and eggs

NOW THAT THE usual autumn scarcity of eggs is accompanied by a smaller bacon ration, the housewife is angrily asking why. What's gone wrong—to put us in this state six years after the war? she demands.

It is no use telling her that we are, in fact, producing more eggs and nearly as much bacon as in prewar days. She still cannot get enough for her family's needs and, since the home supply is obviously inadequate, she doesn't understand why we don't buy more from abroad. To tell her that we are buying as much as we can get and rather more than we can afford is also no comfort.

But it is worth while trying to understand this problem. The key fact is that we could greatly increase our home production of eggs and bacon and so increase our rations, if we could get more feeding-stuffs. This means getting oilcake for cattle, bran and barley meal for pigs, and coarse grains for chickens.

If British farmers had all they needed of these things at the right price they could rapidly raise larger flocks and herds.

Just now, not enough feeding-stuffs are coming in, so the population of pigs and poultry grows slowly, if at all. Farmers are very annoyed about this. Many of them blame the Government bitterly for not importing more. The critics see the choice as one between importing more eggs and bacon from abroad, or importing more animal feeding-stuffs and raising our own production of these foods.

IN fact, we could buy rather more food if we had unlimited dollars to spend. But we could not get—or afford—more feeding-stuffs.

"Imported supplies are dear, scarce and precarious," said Mr. Tom Williams, Minister of Agriculture, recently. They remain scarce and precarious and have got still dearer. The Ministry has had to put up prices to the farmers, and that has caused some small producers to give up their chickens and cut down on their pigs.

For chickens, we want coarse grains, principally maize. Most of our maize used to come from Argentina and the United States. Recently we have had to look for new sources of supply, and we had 267,000 tons from Russia last year.

We are actually getting more maize from all sources this year than last. In the first five months of 1950 we imported a total of 561,000 tons, and in the same time this year 743,000 tons.

Yet there was a special difficulty this year. In last year's first five months Argentina sent us 96,000 tons and the United States 181,000 tons. Because of the trade dispute with Argentina, supplies from that country have been cut off, but America and Russia have sent more.

Unfortunately the cost of our maize imports rose by half as much again—which shows what happens when you are forced to buy nowadays in the world's dollar markets.

THE story of animal feeding-stuffs is much the same. In the first seven months of 1949 we got 315,000 tons at a cost of £6,500,000. This year it had risen to 670,000 tons, costing over £20,000,000.

Again we had to buy in dollar markets—over half of the total, in this case. The Commonwealth and Ireland between them sent us less than one-twelfth. And although every available ton was scratched up from other countries, their contributions were trifling.

We could save a lot of money and have more food if only pig and poultry production could be increased *at home*. And there would be other advantages, since both beasts and birds have valuable by-products.

The Americans used to claim they used all of a pig except the squeal. Nowadays we ourselves are at least as resourceful.

If we accept the proposition that all the imported feeding-stuffs we can find or afford are coming in already, and that the Government buyers scouring the world for more will not miss any chances in the future, what can still be done?

There is only one solution—to grow more feeding-stuff crops; mainly coarse grains for the hens and a variety of possible crops for pigs. This must be done without encroaching on what we already grow for human consumption!

It is not an easy task, but there is still a lot of so-called "marginal" land that could be used.

Every existing farm and every garden *can* be made to raise a bit more. Every district has still many acres of semi-wasted land. If we want more eggs and bacon, we have to remember this—and do something about it. It is no use just sitting back and blaming the Government or the weather. Get growing!

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FREE SPEECH

Children who are made to feel inferior

PARENTS OF CHILDREN entering secondary grammar schools are now facing heavy expenses for compulsory school uniform. Most secondary modern schools only require a cap or badge to be worn, other uniform being optional.

Until this difference is abolished, secondary modern pupils will feel inferior and the two types of schools will not have the same standing. Rules concerning uniform should be the same for all secondary schools in a given area. Only simple uniform should be required and grants towards the cost should be available where necessary. — HEADMISTRESS, Sussex.

Our Grimy Front Door

DO WE DO ENOUGH to make entry to this country attractive? I have just spent a holiday on the other side of the Atlantic. In the docks at Montreal a comfortable bus whisked us off, free of charge, to a clean and cheerful-looking railway station.

On our return to Glasgow we stood for nearly half an hour before any taxis appeared. At last, cross and weary, we reached the smuts and gloom of Queen Street Station.—MRS. H. CAMERON, Ardnahane Cove, Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire.

The Real Old Bailey

I AM THOROUGHLY ENJOYING Michael Gilbert's serial, *The Trial of Victoria Lamartine*, and also K. J. Petts's illustrations. But the courtroom scene (JOHN BULL, August 25) shows a warder

Petts's court scene

beside Victoria in the dock. Would not a woman prisoner be accompanied by a wardress?—GORDON H. WAGSTAFF, 448 Sutton Road, Southend, Essex.

. . . In courtrooms I have seen all over the country, barristers sit facing the judge, with their backs towards the prisoner.—LAW STUDENT, Derbyshire.

Petts's drawing was completely accurate. A woman prisoner would be accompanied in the dock by a warder and a wardress, the wardress being on the prisoner's left. Position of barristers' seats varies from court to court. Petts showed them correctly for an Old Bailey trial.

Saving And Wasting

PAPER IS SCARCE and shockingly dear. The sheet I am writing on cost 1s. a ream in 1939 and is 11s. 6d. now. I take good care not to waste any.

But how can I stop other people wasting paper on me? My name is in the telephone directory. Dozens of mail-order tradesmen, selling anything from a new religion to black-market hams from Eire, send me circulars and price lists. If you publish this letter I shall get another load of paper—catalogues, notices, invitations to join societies or thrift clubs, those terrible chain letters.

I save paper with one hand. And I'm snowed under with waste on the other. —MRS. ANNE MUNRO, Sky End, Hordle, Hants.

Horrible Necessity

MAY I REPLY TO the letter complaining of the use of barbed wire by farmers ("Free Speech," August 4) by giving one or two reasons why it is used. Cattle are very quick to notice the difference between plain and barbed wire and will soon push through plain wire, unless six or seven strands are erected close together—a very expensive job. Barbed wire, however, will turn most stock.

I agree that it is horrible stuff and causes many injuries to humans and stock alike. Nevertheless, other than an electric fence, there is nothing better as a deterrent. Without its use many accidents would occur through straying stock.—G. MORRIS, Gwynfro, Verwig, Cardigan.

A Word Each Way

WILL SCOTT'S CLEVER STORY, *Upside Down Mystery* (JOHN BULL, August 25), in which the plot hinged on the words HOOD ICE BOX CO reading exactly the same when turned upside down and reflected in a mirror, set me thinking that this would apply to the letters B, C, D, E, H, I, K, O and X when printed in capitals. Here are a few words formed from these letters, each of which would read the same if turned upside down and reflected: BOOK, BIDE, BODE, CHIDE, CODE, COOK, CHICK, DEED, DECK, EXCEED, HIKE, KICK.

Readers may like to make their own lists.—F. MYERSCOUGH, 7 North Cliff Street, Preston, Lancs.

This Age Of Friendship

RECENTLY I WAS SHOWING my children round the docks in Glasgow. Some Indian seamen, interested in the boys' kilts, spoke to them and waved from their perches where they were painting a ship. One of the boys said: "Gosh, aren't these Indians friendly people!"

I find this a great change from the attitude when I was a child. If, as seldom happened, a coloured man appeared, many children used to run indoors.—E. G. MACFARLANE, 3 Alpin Road, Dundee.

Dowsing Ups And Downs

BRITISH MAGAZINES take some time to reach here, and I have just been reading Nigel Sligh's story, *The Water Queen* (JOHN BULL, May 5). The illustration shows the dowsing rod rising as it passes over a water supply. I have often seen dowsing rods, both whalebone and forked twig, being used. But they have always bent down, as if reaching out to the water.

To watch the rod move in the hands of an expert dowser is uncanny. The tip of the rod curves slowly and then the two handles follow the curving, while the dowser's hands shake with excitement.—MRS. J. S. LITCHFIELD, P.O. Box 116, Darwin, Australia.

The rod may move up or down when water is located. Many dowsers say it depends on the way it is held.

Talking Cured Him

AS A CHILD I SUFFERED from a speech impediment and I was very interested in Mrs. N. Newman's letter ("Free Speech," August 18) describing how she was cured. All trace of my own impediment vanished as the result of the following advice: Half an hour before going to sleep, in the quietness of your own room, read aloud, slowly and deliberately, any passage from a book, magazine or newspaper. Vary this by reciting any piece committed to memory. —L. ROWLANDS, The Memorial Hospital, Brecon, South Wales.

A Sunday In Barcelona

LLEWELLYN HUGHES'S FINE STORY, *The Trumpet Calls*, brought back memories of the bullfights we saw in Barcelona this summer. During the Sunday afternoon when I took the enclosed snap, we

saw six bulls killed and the picador and horse fall.—L. MASON, 127 Horninglow Road, Sheffield, 5.

Shoppers Have A Go

HELPING A FRIEND to make jam, I suggested weighing the sugar. Every bag was short. The nearest to accuracy was a pound bag which was half an ounce short.—E. S., South Shields.

. . . My sister-in-law had a crop of first-class lettuces and offered them to her greengrocer at 1d. each, pick as he chose. He declined, saying he could not sell his own. His were priced at 6d. and 8d.—THOMAS P. SPARROW, 82 Lozells Road, Birmingham, 19.

. . . Funny that my grocer and butcher, who both sell fruit and vegetables, are from 1d. to 2d. a pound cheaper than the greengrocers in the town.—E. W. S., Dovercourt, Essex.

. . . Rising prices are being used to take the customer for a ride. At a country store, the assistant took the article I asked for from a shelf, shook the dust of ages from it, calmly took a pencil and crossed out 1s. 3d., then charged me 1s. 6d.—A. R. WARREN, 61 Shelley Road, Chelmsford, Essex.

Letters intended for publication should be marked "Free Speech" and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

IN June, to celebrate the Festival, Covent Garden put on its first flower show in its 350-year history. Molly Moss went there to make notes for her painting of the second show —a display of late summer flowers—which takes place this week. High spots of the show are two mammoth horns of plenty spilling out flowers, and a fifty-foot floral replica of the famous Festival Skylon.

When we had our clothes dry cleaned we had them re-textured and mothproofed at the same time by the wonderful new 'Catophrene' process.

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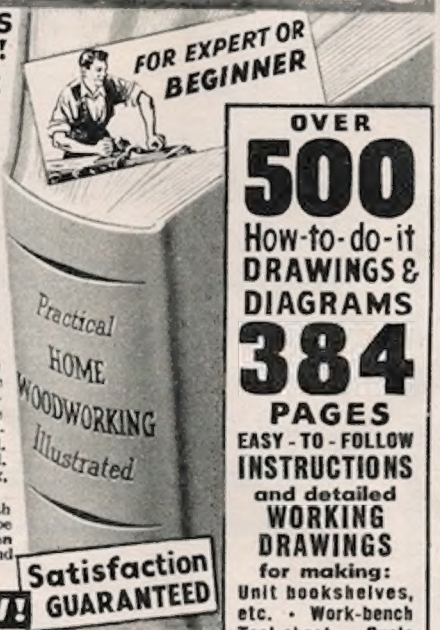

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Broadway sends its best-loved star

After a London flop, Mary Martin hopes to return in triumph with *South Pacific*. Will British theatre-goers fall for her warm friendliness as hard as New Yorkers did? *by GEOFFREY BOCCA*

NEW YORK

THERE ARE SOME American actors and actresses who take a London failure badly and return to the United States swearing never to darken the stage doors of Shaftesbury Avenue again. But Mary Martin fell in love with Britain while appearing in a resounding flop, and she resolved to return to London in triumph. That is why she has left the New York company of *South Pacific*, in which she has played to packed houses every night for two years, to open in the London production of the same show this autumn.

To a starry-eyed theatrical America, it seems impossible that anything Mary Martin touches can fail. Actually, in a hard-working and sometimes heartbreaking career she has appeared in as many flops as hits. "And the one London show I starred in—*Pacific 1860*—flopped too," she adds. "If *South Pacific* succeeds my score will be even."

Quarrel With Coward

The connection between *Pacific 1860* and *South Pacific* stops at the titles. Noël Coward wrote his musical play to reopen Drury Lane after the war, but the winter was too much for it. The theatre was cold and shivers ran through the audiences. The critics' comments on the show were freezing and, after Mary Martin had blown up over one of her costumes, her relations with Noël Coward were even colder.

Strained relations continued for some years. They were healed one night when Coward saw *South Pacific* in New York and went round to offer his congratulations. Mary, her husband, Richard Halliday, and Noël Coward fell on each other in the ecstasy of their reconciliation and they all went to Connecticut to relax at the Hallidays' country home. According to one story which the Hallidays will neither deny nor confirm, the reconciliation was almost wrecked by a distressing incident. Noël Coward found a painting he had once given Mary hanging in one of the most important but least flattering rooms in the house. "What is my 'White Cliffs of Dover' doing there?" Coward thundered. Faint with dismay, Mary said, "The light is better there," and they all burst into laughter.

Success—Then Blunders

When the auditorium lights go out and the curtain rises on *South Pacific*, theatre-goers will see on the stage a trim girl, five feet four inches tall, with a good but not exciting figure, and reddish-brown hair cropped short. She is thirty-seven, looks twenty-seven, and has a face which has been described as shaped like the heart on an old-fashioned chocolate box. She acts well, dances well, and has the gift, shared by few, of being able to sing a familiar song in a way which makes you feel you are hearing it for the first time. But her big secret is her personality. She radiates a warmth, friendliness and honesty which has been missing from the theatre since the days of Gracie Fields in her prime.

For budding actresses, the Mary Martin life story is a copy-book example of perseverance, cruel luck, sudden success followed by howling blunders of judgment, and finally attainment of

Mary Martin in *South Pacific*. Her bad judgment prevented her from starring in *Oklahoma!* as well

One of Mary Martin's scenes from *South Pacific*—the story of a nurse with a racial problem

a unique position in the American theatre. A sort of success hit the young Martin girl early. She was born in Weatherford, Texas, of Scottish and Scots-Irish stock. After leaving school she cleared the hayloft in her uncle Luke's farm and opened the Mary Martin School of Dancing with three pupils. Soon she had thirty pupils and a big problem on her mind. "All I knew was one dance taught me by my sister Jerry," she said later. "So I went to Fort Worth every day for dancing lessons and managed to keep one step ahead of the kids."

At the age of seventeen she married—a marriage which failed in two years, but not before she became the mother of a boy, Larry. While she taught dancing she accepted payment from her pupils in pigs, sweets and gallons of petrol, which she sold for cash. Eventually the cash added up to enough for a shot at Hollywood, and away she went with baby Larry. This was the heartbreak period in which she attended auditions every day, sometimes several times a day. Local agents started to say: "Here comes Audition Mary again."

One evening in 1938 she auditioned for Laurence Schwab, a man who was to become her greatest fan and the keenest analyst of her personality. "She looked half-starved," Schwab says, "and seemed poised for flight into another world, a world all her own."

He noted approvingly that she began with confidence. She sang a few songs, one of them "September in the Rain," and ended with a racy improvisation on the waltz-song "Il Bacio." Schwab was deeply impressed, and taken aback at the end when Mary made a curt bow and left the room. Intrigued, he turned quizzically to the pianist, who shrugged.

"She's had so many auditions," the pianist said, "but it seems nothing ever comes of anything. She's not—well, she's not exactly hardened to failure, but let's say she's just not expecting anything good."

Schwab asked: "Would she consider a Broadway contract 'good'?" Next day, having signed a two-year contract with Schwab, she was eastbound for New York.

Fur Coat Strip-tease

Her big chance came a few months later in 1939. Cole Porter was writing the music for a new show called *Leave It To Me*, and Mary Martin was given a small part which another actress had turned down because there was no song in it. In rehearsal the producers decided there was a gap in the continuity and asked Porter to write a song to fill it. Porter sat down and quickly wrote a rather naughty number called "My Heart Belongs to Daddy." Mary Martin sang it doing a wild strip-tease with a fur coat, and became the overnight talk of New York. "I didn't know what the song was all about at the time," Mary says honestly. "In fact, I went back to Texas and sang it at a party Pop threw for me. Nobody took offence so I guess it wasn't so bad after all."

At the age of twenty-five, Mary Martin had Arrived. To Arrive in New York means that a sudden series of explosions happens in one's life. She saw herself on the cover of *Life* in a fur coat and underwear. She rented an expensive apartment. She made guest radio appearances. There were nightclub offers and one offer of £5,000 for six weeks' work in Hollywood, which she could not resist.

She played in *The Great Victor Herbert*, *Birth of the Blues*, *Star-Spangled Rhythm* and *Kiss the Boys Goodbye*. Her Hollywood adventures lasted longer than six months but, professionally speaking, they were not happy. At one point she complained about her scripts and was introduced to the story editor, a slim, dark six-footer from Denver called Richard Halliday. She got no better scripts, but she got Halliday. They eloped soon after that.

Unlucky Silver Dollar

When she had spent more months making more films, none of them very good, Halliday left Paramount and has been his wife's business manager ever since. They returned thankfully to New York with a new daughter, Mary Heller. Their immediate problem was the choice of Mary's next show. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein had written a new musical which Dick Halliday liked but Mary Martin didn't. Also on offer was a flashy musical called *Dancing in the Streets* which Mary Martin liked and Dick Halliday didn't. In the end Mary spun a silver dollar to decide, and gleefully chose *Dancing in the Streets*. Her glee did not last long. "I'll never flip that lousy dollar again," she says. "*Dancing in the Streets* closed during its out-of-town tryout without reaching New York at all. And do you know what the Rodgers and Hammerstein show was? *Oklahoma!*"

Her next effort was better. It was a musical called *One Touch of Venus*. Mary Martin was modest about accepting it at first. "How could I play Venus?" she said. "In Hollywood they told me my neck was too long, my chin was too sharp and my nose was too big. Then Dick took me to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and showed me all the Venuses of history. One was definitely pudgy. So I said, 'I'm prettier than that. I'll take the part.'" *One Touch of Venus* called for Mary's second theatrical strip.

After that, Mary Martin appeared in the successful *Lute Song*, then crossed the Atlantic for her bitter-sweet experiences with Noël Coward. She winced at the words *South Pacific* when Richard Rodgers asked her to star in it with Ezio Pinza, the basso from the Metropolitan Opera House. "The Pacific isn't really my lucky ocean," she said, thinking of *Pacific 1860*. But she did not seriously hesitate about accepting. The reputation of Rodgers and Hammerstein was hitting its peak. She remembered too vividly turning down *Oklahoma!* and the team had capped this great hit with *Carousel* and *Allegro*. Mary said yes, and the work began.

Mary herself suggested what was to prove the most striking innovation of the whole show. She has a number called "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of my Hair," which she sings in a makeshift shower. Mary's idea was to wash her hair properly on the stage. The idea of Mary washing her hair with soap eight times a week seemed to stun the nation. Hair specialists almost had hysterics. "She'll wash out all the natural oils!" they cried. "She'll be as bald as a coot in six months." Mary spared them the worst news of all. During the out-of-town tour she discovered that her hasty shower was not rinsing out the soap, so she washed her hair again after the show and yet again the following morning. In spite of these repeated washings, she noticed no ill-effects.

On April 9, 1949, *South Pacific* opened. The audience went wild. The toughest critics ran out of superlatives. With the possible exception of *Oklahoma!* no show had had such a reception in New York for twenty years.

Lesson For Americans

South Pacific is a story of the Pacific battle-front in the second World War. It is about a young American girl who falls in love with a handsome but middle-aged French planter, gives him up when she finds that he once had a native mistress and now has two mulatto children, then goes back to him after she believes him killed.

The audience is brought to an exciting sense of kinship with the exotic. *South Pacific* tells Americans that they cannot hope to hem their emotions inside the safe boundaries of their own civilization. A knuckleheaded nurse from a sensible place like Little Rock, Arkansas, is just as likely to fall in love with a French planter as any other girl from a less fortunate land. Given the right French planter, things like modern conveniences and even one's birthright become unimportant. The whole theme of *South Pacific* is in line with the American movement away from isolationism. Because British people are not faced at the moment with the same intellectual problems as the Americans, it is possible that *South Pacific* may not make such a great appeal, but the music and story are still good enough to make the show a hit.

No Real-life Romance

Even more sensational than the success of Mary Martin was Ezio Pinza. Americans loved *South Pacific* so much that they dreamed up a real-life romance between Mary and Ezio. To anyone knowing the devotion of Mary Martin and Richard Halliday the idea was laughable. But the two stars are great friends. One night not long ago, after Pinza had left the show, he told Mary: "People keep asking me to sing 'Some Enchanted Evening.' They don't realize that I can sing that song only to you."

"I know what you mean, Ezio," said Mary reflectively. "You need the background atmosphere. Whenever I sing 'My Heart Belongs to Daddy,' I get the urge to strip."

Mary Martin left the show this summer, and set out in a slow boat for Britain with Richard Halliday, Larry, now nineteen, and Heller, nine, to make a motor tour of Ireland and Scotland before the London rehearsals began. After 2,400 shampoos the hair remains thick and glossy. "It's like wire wool," she says, tugging at it. She intends to keep up the soap treatment even when *South Pacific* closes. But with the London première coming up she crosses her fingers and hopes that day will be several years and thousands of shampoos away. THE END

The trial of Victoria Lamartine

by MICHAEL GILBERT

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

Victoria's fingerprints were on the knife; Macrea's defence had to take a new turn

"You will not intimidate me, Mr. Macrea," the inspector said. Macrea gave a crocodile smile

THE CROWN'S CASE against Victoria Lamartine, a French employee of the Family Hotel, Euston, was that she had stabbed to death Major Eric Thoseby in his room at the hotel; that Thoseby was the father of her dead illegitimate child (Thoseby had been a British agent in France during the war) and that he had deserted her.

Victoria's case was that she had not murdered Thoseby; that the father of her child was a Lieutenant Julian Wells, another agent, who had been captured in a Gestapo raid, and who had since disappeared.

Fighting the case for Victoria was the firm of Markby, Wragg and Rumbold, solicitors. They had briefed Hargest Macrea, one of the most formidable barristers in London.

Nap Rumbold, son of the senior partner, was in France trying to find evidence about Wells and checking up on French witnesses in the case—and he was in desperate trouble. A highly organized gang of smugglers who were interested in the case—Mrs. Roper, one of the witnesses for the prosecution, was involved with them—had decided it was time his investigations were interrupted. He had narrowly escaped with his life by jumping in the river.

Meanwhile, in England, Major McCann, a wartime friend of Nap's, was also working on the case. His job was to look into Wells's background. It was on evidence of Wells that Victoria's case depended. All that she knew about him was that he had been a teacher at St. Ambrose's, a preparatory school near Winchester, before the war. So to Winchester went McCann.

PART 5

Tuesday

AT eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning, McCann was in Salisbury, looking for a pub called the Dean's Frolic. He had learnt at St. Ambrose's that Wells had not parted company with the school under the happiest auspices. The governors hadn't liked him keeping company with—the headmaster had discreetly skirted the possibility that Wells had actually lived with—a barmaid called Ivy Pratt at the Dean's Frolic in Salisbury.

The Dean's Frolic was worth finding: real beam and wattle, not fake Tudor: the saloon bar had one of those smooth red brick floors which must be trodden upon for hundreds of years before they come to their prime. There was a lot of clean brass, a cheerful fire and, at that hour of the morning, no other customer.

"I remember this place well during the war," said McCann to the stout, grey-haired man who drew his beer for him into a pint glass. He looked as if he might well be the Jas Firmin who was licensed, according to the spidery writing over the low doorway, to sell ales, wines and spirits by retail.

"Ah—you'd have been in camp here, I expect." He didn't really sound interested. It was just professional talk.

"Larkhill," said McCann. "'Forty-two."

That was a safe gambit, too. A million gunners passed through Larkhill during the war.

"I thought first," said the man, "that you might have been Air Force. Then I thought, no. Not enough hair cream."

He even managed to put this one across mechanically, as if he'd said it a thousand times before. Probably he had.

"One thing I remember about this place—you might call it a feature of the place—that very pretty barmaid you had. It wasn't when I was here in 'forty-two. It was when I came back again, in 'forty-five. Ivy. That was her name."

"Well, now," said the man. "So you're a friend of Ivy's." McCann caught the glint of amusement in his eye, and looking past him he saw there was a girl, standing in the hatchway which led to the next bar. He had to take a chance on it.

"Talk of the Devil," he said. "What'll it be, Ivy?"

"A gin and pep," said Ivy.

McCann saw a brown-haired, sensible-looking girl of about thirty. She was quietly dressed, had good brown eyes, bad teeth, a generous mouth and an appealing band of freckles over the bridge of the nose.

She poured herself out a gin, added the peppermint and renewed McCann's beer for him.

"And how are you keeping, Miss Pratt?" he asked.

"Can't complain. How are you?"

"I can see quite well," said McCann truthfully, "that you don't really remember me at all."

"Well——"

"I'm sure I'm not surprised either, when I remember the crowd of admirers that used to surround you."

Ivy downed half her drink in a gratified sort of way and observed that uniform changed a man so, you could hardly credit it.

"You don't even remember my skill on the 'double-in double-out'"—McCann gestured with his head towards the dart board on the wall.

"Oh—in the private bar, you mean. We never had a board in the public during the war."

"In the private bar," added McCann, hastily. "It struck me you'd shifted it."

He had to think quickly what tactics he should adopt. In the end it was the honesty of the girl's eyes that decided him. It didn't seem to be a situation where anything could be lost by straightforwardness. In any case, other people would be coming into the place soon.

The man was busy polishing glasses, at the other end of the room. McCann leaned one elbow on the counter and said, in a low voice, to the girl: "As a matter of fact, I've got a bit of news for you."

"Yes?" said Ivy, non-committally.

"I ran into another friend of yours a few weeks ago. A chap I used to know in the Army. Julian Wells."

FOR a moment McCann thought she hadn't heard. Then he saw that she had gone very white. She opened her mouth and said, in the tiniest voice, as if it was coming to him through layers of folded gauze. "No, no. You can't have done that. How could you? He's dead." Then she fainted.

The crash brought the landlord running. Together they carried her through the partition door and into the private bar. There was a sofa and McCann put her down on it while the landlord went for water. Before he was back she was sitting up. She still looked bad.

"What happened, Ivy?" The landlord sounded reproachful. "You did give us a turn."

McCann had been thinking hard. He pulled the man to one side. "I'm afraid," he said, "that it's something I told her. Bad news—it was my fault. Didn't break it gently enough. If you could leave us alone for a few minutes—could we have the door shut. . . ?"

The landlord looked as if he would have liked

to protest, but Ivy, recovering fast, gave him no chance. She hustled him from the room and slid the bolt. Then she turned on McCann, with a dangerous light in her eyes.

"Well?"

McCann did his best to explain. It took some time.

"I see. You haven't really seen—you made that up."

"Yes. I thought I'd see if I could get some reactions——"

"You got some all right." She looked out of the window. Her mind was far away. Ten years away, McCann guessed.

"You know about me and Julian—when he was at that school?"

McCann nodded.

"Well, when he left and joined up, I went away. I forgot about him. And that was that. Then, suddenly—in early 1943 that would have been, because I'd just come back to Salisbury—one day he blew in, all dressed up in his second lieutenant's uniform and sat down at my table. I was working at that big café in the square then. And it all started again, just as if it had never stopped. You never knew Julian, did you? If you'd known him you might have understood that part. He was a very easy sort of person to love. He wasn't big and tough and strong and rough. Girls may marry that sort, because they think they'll be a success in life and look after them—the poor saps—but when it's just love, they go for what they like, and it's the soft, lost type like Julian that gets them every time—or it does me."

Ivy sighed, reached for a glass, and helped herself absentmindedly to gin out of a bottle under the shelf. "That's how it was," she said. "We started just where we left off. I was happy. He seemed happy. He was stationed at Larkhill. He was a gunner, too, you know, before he started doing that secret service stuff. There isn't much else to say. I didn't know till afterwards that I wasn't the only one. I don't suppose it would have made much difference if I had known, come to think of it."

"You mean there was another girl."

"Yes. A Mrs. Bellerby. The wife of one of the staff sergeants at the camp. I never met her, but I heard all about her afterwards, you can bet. There's never any shortage of a girl's best friends to tell her things like that. Anyway, he went away to do his training for that other job. Then I heard he was dead. You bringing his name out suddenly, it gave me a turn."

"You never heard from him again? Before he went over to France—or even while he was there?"

"Not a sausage." Ivy finished her gin and got to her feet. "Why don't you go and have a word with Mrs. Bellerby?" she said surprisingly. "Don't say I sent you."

"Is she still about?"

"She was last Wednesday. I sat next to her and her husband in the cinema. I didn't introduce myself."

"Perhaps I will," said McCann.

"They've got a cottage outside Amesbury on the Tidworth road. It's just past Stonehenge Inn, on the right. You can't miss it."

"I'll do that," said McCann. He went out to look up an Amesbury bus.

McCann walked up a short gravel path between two rows of flat, whitened stones. There were a few marigolds, a few despairing china asters; the rest was a dreary jungle of Michaelmas daisies.

For a few moments after he had rung the bell nothing happened. He had no idea what he wanted to say. He felt glad, in a cowardly way, that there should be no one at home.

Then a child's voice shouted something from inside the house and there was a shuffle of slippered feet down the hall. The woman who opened the door answered one question before she spoke. The brown hair, the plain but friendly face, the kind, slightly anxious eyes, the immature tilt to the nose, even the freckles. They were all there. He had seen them all before. She was a little older than Ivy Pratt, less carefully dressed than Victoria Lamartine. But in effect she was the same. McCann knew exactly what he was looking at. He was looking at the sort of girl that had appealed to Lieutenant Julian Wells.

He was aware that he had been staring. "I beg your pardon," he said. "Mrs. Bellerby?"

"Yes."

"I'm McCann. I'm quite certain the name won't mean anything to you. I'm from London. I—look here—I can't possibly explain all this on the doorstep. May I come inside?"

He observed a flicker of distrust. "I promise I won't try to sell you a vacuum cleaner."

"I'm sure you won't." Mrs. Bellerby smiled. "Please come in."

She led the way down the passage and showed him into a neat and cheerful room. When McCann looked round from taking it all in, he found the woman's calm eyes summing him up.

He decided suddenly to put the whole thing plainly before her.

"I'm going to tell you a story," he said, "from the beginning. It's a true story. I'm leaving out one or two names, but otherwise I'm giving you the full strength of it."

She was a good listener. She only interrupted once, when he came to the trial. Then she pointed to the evening paper and asked: "Is this the Euston murder?"

"That's it," said McCann.

"All right," she said. "I just wanted to know. Please go on."

At the end she said: "How do I come into it?"

"The young officer," said McCann, "the one who disappeared in France. It was Lieutenant Wells."

"You didn't have to tell me, really," Mrs. Bellerby said. "I guessed. He's dead, isn't he?"

"Yes," said McCann. "Yes. I really think he must be."

"Poor Julian." She was silent for a long time. It was getting dark in the room, but there was still a little light in the sky. She seemed to be watching the clouds. "Poor Julian. What a—what a *person* he was."

She stopped for a while, thinking. Then she said: "Have you got a photograph—of the French girl? The ones in the papers weren't very good."

McCann took out a photograph and pushed it across the table.

"She looks kind," she said, after a long look. "What were you hoping to find—down here, I mean?"

"We were just casting around. It seemed a hopeless chance, the time was too short. But we wanted to find people who knew Wells."

She was silent for a long time. "I wouldn't want to give evidence, not about us—not unless I had to."

"Of course not," said McCann. He was out of his depth. "I don't know what the law is about all this. One of the things we wanted to prove was that it was more likely that Wells would be the father of the child than Thoseby. That he was the sort of man who. . . ." He tailed off uncomfortably. "Another thing," he went on, "we thought we might get hold of someone who had heard from him when he was in France. Messages did get out."

"Not a word," said Mrs. Bellerby. "I think you were right, though. He'd have written to me if he could have written to anyone."

"Yes, I expect he would," said McCann. "I'm afraid that's all there is to it. I'll have to have a word with our counsel."

"How old would the boy have been?"

McCann took a moment to think what she was talking about. "Vicky's boy? If he had lived—he'd have been almost exactly five. Why?"

It was almost dark in the room by now and very quiet. Mrs. Bellerby turned and looked full at McCann. There was just enough light to see that she was smiling.

"I ran into another friend of yours the other

In London, Macrea picked up the telephone, answered gruffly, and then began to listen intently. Occasionally he jotted something down on a slip of paper. "Say that again," he said suddenly. The telephone clacked and buzzed.

"Can you get 'em up here by midday tomorrow? Good work. No. I don't know how we'll use it. I'll have to have a word with her before I go into court tomorrow."

The telephone said something else.

"No," said Macrea. "Highly illegal, I should think. But I'll do it gladly for the sake of seeing Claudian's face."

* * *

WEDNESDAY

Mr. Summers, prosecuting, addressed the witness: "Your name is Charles Edward Younger. You are the doctor attached for police duties to 'Q' Division of the Metropolitan Police?"

"I am."

"Were you called to an hotel in Pearlyman Street on the night of March 14 of this year?"

"Yes."

"What time did you reach the hotel?"

"Ten minutes after midnight."

"You first examined the body almost immediately after ten past twelve. How long, in your opinion, had he then been dead?"

"Well, that is a question I always answer with some caution. Of course, in this case, I was on the scene early enough to be reasonably accurate. I should have said that death had occurred not more than two hours before and

day," McCann said softly. "Julian Wells." Ivy's reaction was immediate and spectacular

certainly not less than one hour. Most probably nearer ninety minutes."

[Doctor Young then gave, at some length, his technical reasons for arriving at this estimate.]

"Thank you, doctor. Would you describe, now, to the court, the wound which you examined—there was no doubt, by the way, that this wound was the cause of death?"

"None at all. It was a single deep incision. The point of entry was just below the sternum, three inches to the right of the ensiform cartilage. The wound penetrated the left lobe of the liver, passing upwards in the direction of the left shoulder and into the heart. Such a wound would cause death in a matter of seconds."

"Omitting all technicalities, Doctor Young, would it be correct to say that the weapon which caused this wound was thrust upwards, under the ribs, into the heart?"

"Yes, in a left-handed direction."

"You are of the opinion that the person who used the weapon held it in the left hand."

"It is not a question of opinion. I am certain."

"Very well. You have seen this knife." A black-handled, long-bladed, kitchen knife, sharpened on both edges, one of the exhibits, was handed to the witness. "Was the wound consistent with having been made with a knife such as this one?"

"Yes, I should think that was about right."

"Would it need great strength to inflict such a wound with such a weapon? Could a woman have delivered such a blow?"

"Certainly—even a strong and determined child, striking in that direction."

"Do I understand that it was a skilful blow?"

"Either skilful or lucky. A little lower, it would have caused a nasty wound in the bowel, but would not have killed—or not immediately. A little higher, and the blow might have been turned by the ribs."

"I want to put to you something that was said by one of the earlier witnesses. [Mr. Summers read parts of Major Amman's evidence.] Do you agree that this was the sort of blow that Major Ammon was describing?"

"Yes. This blow was certainly struck by someone standing in front of Major Thoseby, using the knife with its point upwards, with a left-handed, underarm swing. I am not an expert on French Resistance work, but that is certainly the sort of blow it was."

COUNSEL for the defence, Macrea, examined the witness. "Doctor Younger, I would like to go back to something you said at the beginning of your evidence. You said that you were always cautious in offering an opinion as to how long a person had been dead?"

"Yes."

"Does the certainty with which you can give your opinion depend on how soon after death you see the body?"

"On that and other factors."

"Certainly, other factors must count. But is the length of time the chief factor?"

"I cannot answer a purely hypothetical question like that."

"Very well. Let me offer you a concrete case. If you saw a body within five minutes of death what would be your approximate margin of error?"

"I should know to within a minute or two."

"Right. Suppose now that you had examined Major Thoseby's body within half an hour of its discovery. It had not been disturbed. It was in the same room as that in which death took place—or so we are assuming. How accurate could you be then?"

"In those circumstances, I should be able to tell within ten minutes either way."

"Thank you. I am not going to use these figures against you, doctor, you understand. They are agreed to be approximations. Now actually you saw the body about ninety minutes after it was discovered. And your estimate of the time of death, which you have just given the court, has a margin of error of sixty minutes. 'Not more than two hours' I think you said, 'and not less than one.'"

"Yes."

"It is true, then, that the possible margin of error grows rapidly as time is allowed to elapse between death and examination."

"Certainly. I have never denied it. If you allowed twenty-four hours to elapse you might find it difficult to say within six hours when death took place. It is very important that a doctor should see the body as soon as possible."

"Yes," said Macrea. "Then why didn't he?"

"Really, sir——"

"Don't misunderstand me, please. I am not imputing professional negligence. I happen to know that you were summoned from your flat at ten minutes to midnight and you have told us that you were examining the body at ten past—I don't think that anyone could complain of slowness there. But I would like to know the reason for the delay of more than an hour in fetching you."

"Well—I can hardly answer that. I understand there was some confusion over the matter between the hotel manager, his waiter and the inspector in charge of the case."

"I see. We can recall one of those witnesses, if it seems necessary. But no doubt the inspector will be able to enlighten us when he gives his evidence." Macrea smiled at Mr. Summers, who took the opportunity of making a bad-tempered note on his brief.

"It is true, however, doctor, that if you had been on the spot by, let us say, a quarter past eleven, you would have been able to fix the time of death very much more accurately."

"Certainly."

"And if anyone wished to conceal the exact time of death one of the ways of doing so would be to delay the arrival of the medical expert who was to inspect the body?"

"I think that follows."

"Thank you. Now, doctor, in giving your estimate of the latest time of death you said, if I have you correctly, 'certainly not less than an hour' and then you said 'more probably ninety minutes.' I wasn't quite clear on that. Did you mean that ninety minutes before your examination was the probable time of the murder—or the probable short limit?"

"I meant the probable short limit."

"I see. That would take us back to twenty minutes to eleven."

"Yes—I suppose that's right."

"You have heard that the prisoner is alleged to have committed this offence at about a quarter to eleven."

"Yes, I——"

"In that case, doctor, it is your professional opinion that the murder probably took place before the prisoner's arrival on the scene?"

"I don't think you can use these times quite as meticulously as that."

"I only said 'probably.' I believe that was your own word."

"With that qualification, yes."

* * *

Mr. Summers re-examined hastily.

"As I understand it, doctor, you established two time limits for the latest possible moment of death. One of them was an hour before your examination, the other an hour and a half."

"That is so."

"Then would it not be fair to take the average of your two times and say that the latest *probable* time of death was an hour and a quarter before your examination?"

"Yes. I think that would be reasonable."

"That is to say, five to eleven?"

"Yes."

"That would be ten minutes after the prisoner

Continued on page 22

The blazing gasworks under Newman Spinney

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

Cyril Masterman bored holes into a "useless" coal seam and set it alight. In the white smoke he glimpses a future without fuel crises

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, was a warm and pleasant day in Derbyshire. Near Barlborough, fifteen miles south-east of Sheffield, a herd of red cows munched fresh grass. They paid no attention to the excited men around a curious network of green, blue, black and white pipes on the top of a bare knoll called Newman Spinney. The men were just as unmindful of the cattle and the rolling countryside. They were planning a fire. At 4 p.m. precisely the blaze started in a bed of coal eighty feet below ground. It was expected to burn there for the next nine months.

This deliberately set underground inferno threatens no lives. The coal it burns is of such poor quality that it could not be mined economically. The fire at Newman Spinney will get no headlines, but the steam, smoke and gases it sends up may signal relief for the country's chronic coal crises.

Coal is Britain's biggest natural resource, but possibly the nation's greatest single economic and scientific problem is how to use it economically. What is happening at Newman Spinney is actually a laboratory experiment on a big scale. Instead of cooking a fragment of coal in a test-tube, Ministry of Fuel and Power scientists are using the earth as an oven in which to roast more than a ton of coal a day.

In a rough shed on the site, engineer Alec Rudge constantly analyses the gas that is generated. The quality is unexpectedly good

A waving plume of white steam is the only indication at Newman Spinney that there is fire down below. The steam is created by hot gas from the burning coal, and it is this gas that is watched and tested continuously. If the scientists learn the secret of controlling underground fires to produce usable gas, they will be on their way to realizing an eighty-three year old dream of British science.

The dream involves burning coal underground and using the gas. One use might be to feed it into turbines for generating electricity. Another is to burn the gas under boilers, creating steam for steam engines. There is a suggestion that the gas should be enriched and piped into homes and factories. There is even the possibility of obtaining a gas that could be converted into synthetic petrol.

These visions of a fuel revolution are tucked well back under the greying hair of a five foot eleven inch fuel engineer named Cyril Masterman. As Technical Director of Underground Gasification for the Ministry of Fuel and Power, Masterman allows himself only an occasional day dream of the future, provided the Newman Spinney experiments are successful. Most of his time is spent on the problem of getting coal to burn.

Good Gas From Bad Coal

Masterman and his associates have selected inferior coal for their experiments. "It's far worse," he says, "than the kind we make jokes about. In fact, it is half coal and half dirt, but it is producing unexpectedly good gas, and we've been encouraged to think that some good may come of this seam, although the coal in it is not worth bringing to the surface."

More than half the country's coal reserves is not worth the cost of bringing to the surface by conventional means. Some of this coal is in seams that are too deep. Some is poor in quality and mixed with muck and rock. Many mines, officially "worked out," still contain rich seams that cannot be mined economically.

Opencast mining methods have made more than sixty million tons of coal available in the last few years. Underground gasification may be the answer to utilizing millions more. Although the idea was first suggested in 1868, it is only recently that progress has been made in Britain. Masterman, who probably knows as much about underground gasification as anyone in these islands, has been connected with the problem for less than three years. "When I first heard the words 'underground gasification' a few years ago," he says, "I had a vision of a sort of subterranean gasworks and a feeling that it must all be very complicated."

In practice, underground gasification is almost as simple as two holes bored into a seam of coal. Two vertical holes are joined at the bottom by a channel drilled horizontally. Fire is started in the coal; air is pumped down one hole and gas comes out of the other.

What the passer-by sees at Newman Spinney.

Newman Spinney was selected for the experiment because there was a seam of coal, one end of which had been exposed by opencast mining operations. The location of the coal meant that the horizontal hole could be drilled more easily by men working on the side of the opencast. Work on the site began in November, 1949. It was in March of the following year, after six abortive attempts, that the horizontal drilling, 300 feet long, was successfully completed. There remained the problem of sinking two holes vertically to connect with the horizontal channel.

The holes were to be only four inches in diameter. The problem was how to make sure that seventy-five feet down they would intersect with the horizontal drilling. With the help of the Post Office, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the Atomic Energy Research Station at Harwell, the solution was found.

The Post Office research branch produced an electro-magnetic device. The magnet was inserted in the horizontal bore-hole. A compass was lowered down the vertical drilling. Impulses recorded by the compass enabled the engineers to calculate the relative positions of the compass and the magnetic device.

Cobalt Guided Drillers

Anglo-Iranian research experts borrowed some radio-active cobalt from the atomic energy plant at Harwell. The cobalt was placed in the horizontal hole at the point where the vertical drilling should end. A detecting device, called a sonde, was lowered down the vertical hole. The sonde gave off signals indicating the position of the cobalt and guided the drillers.

When the drilling was completed, there was a U-shaped channel below ground. The hole, four inches in diameter, went down seventy-five feet into the coal, travelled horizontally fifty feet through the seam and then led back seventy-five feet up to the surface. Pipes and testing

The plume of smoke is the only sign that a fire blazes down below

Masterman (right) watches Alfred Robens start the first fire at Newman Spinney

instruments were added so that the gas from the underground fire could be examined.

On May 22 last year, Alfred Robens, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Fuel and Power, became the first Government official to set a coal mine on fire with deliberate intent. Under Masterman's watchful gaze, and while a group of assistants stood by hopefully, armed with balloons to trap the expected gas, Robens detonated six four-pound incendiary bombs installed in the coal seam. The spectators waited with feelings ranging from a local fear that a subterranean holocaust would soon be eating its way under the surrounding hamlets, to the frank scepticism of some of the journalists. Within a few minutes a faint wisp of smoke rose from the upcast pipe. Eighty-two years after it had been first put forward, underground gasification was on its way to reality in Britain.

Keeping The Fire Alight

"The fire went out after two and a half hours," Masterman recalls. "Fortunately, most of the visitors had left by then and we could get down to the problem of keeping our coal burning."

Eventually, a device was used very similar to the gadget used to light domestic gas cookers. The engineers rigged up a gas lighter that could be lowered to the coal and ignited. Once the lighting question was solved, they turned their attention to the best recipe for cooking coal.

Getting coal to burn underground is no great problem. There is a mine in Ohio that was set on fire in the 1880s and which has defied all efforts to extinguish it. It is still burning, having consumed an estimated £17,000,000 worth of coal. Masterman's aim, however, was not just to burn coal but also to control the process so that a usable gas could be obtained.

"If the air supply is correctly controlled," Masterman explains, "the gas coming to the surface can be burned like the gas delivered to a cooking stove. If too much air is supplied, then the burning is completed underground and all we get is non-inflammable gas which, though it may be very hot, may be of much less value."

Engineers and scientists at Newman Spinney have been varying the supply of air to try to find out the amount that will produce the most useful gas. Sometimes they reverse the flow of air to check the fire. On other tests they alternate high and low rates of air supply. The original fire burned more than one ton of very bad coal a day, yet the gas yield has been remarkable. Less than one-fifth as rich as ordinary town gas, the Newman Spinney product showed impressive possibilities as a source of electricity. Had a small gas turbine to generate current from gas been available, Masterman calculates, the fire in fifty feet of coal could have supplied the normal electrical needs of about 1,500 people.

"There are many practical problems to be solved before we can do that sort of thing," Masterman adds hastily with scientific caution. "But the vision of the future is of an area of useless coal being exploited by means of hundreds of small vertical shafts, with the products of combustion being piped to gas turbine engines generating current and passing it into the electricity network."

Masterman believes that one square mile of coal, three feet thick, could produce enough gas to make at least 25,000 kilowatts for ten years. This would be equivalent to the amount of energy yielded by a million tons of coal mined by conventional methods and sent to electric generating stations.

Dangers Of Subsidence

The problems to be overcome before the dream comes true include the study of different types of coal in different locations and the investigation of the danger from subsidence as the coal is burned out. By sending down drills, in the same way as a housewife tests a cake with a knife, the scientists discovered that the original four-inch hole through the coal had burned out into a hole forty feet wide.

New techniques of drilling are being tried both at Newman Spinney and at a new site near Kidderminster. One of these methods is to bore two vertical holes, line them and then use compressed air to blast a way joining the two holes at the bottom.

The new fire at Newman Spinney started this July is expected to burn for about nine months at temperatures as high as 1,500 deg. centigrade. While the main purpose of this experiment is to learn more about obtaining gas, the engineers have considered the possibilities of such by-products as the recovery of sulphur.

Russia's Daily Output

Similar experiments are proceeding in the United States, where underground galleries have been carved out. The project is linked with plans to use the gas in the production of synthetic petrol. Belgian experiments in underground gasification have been directed towards the production of a gas rich enough to replace ordinary town gas. The Russians have gasification plants in operation, and a recent five year plan called for a daily output of 100,000,000 cubic feet of gas by this method.

Russian interest in underground gasification has been traced to Lenin's stay in England before the Russian Revolution. Lenin learned about underground gasification through the great chemist Sir William Ramsay, who in 1912 suggested the idea of burning coal underground as a means of settling a threatened strike of coal-miners. He went as far as to warn the miners to think twice about striking "lest it should be found out the country could do without them." His plans to eliminate miners by converting the entire coal industry to underground gasification did not get beyond the experimental stage.

Masterman's plans, based on virtually unworkable coal, do not threaten the miners of today. The demand for fuel is now so great that underground gasification is an important additional source of power to the maximum that can be obtained by conventional mining methods.

The demand for coal in 1950 was 7,000,000 tons more than in 1949. This year, consumption is running at 8,000,000 tons more than last year. Underground gasification will not warm any homes or keep any factory fire burning in the immediate future. But if the demand for fuel continues at this staggering rate, and Masterman's experiments continue to give encouraging results, Newman Spinney may go down in history as the place where dreams of a fuel revolution came true. THE END

"Consolation?" she said. "Here is consolation." I was so shocked by the slap I hardly heard what else she said. But there was something else

NIGHT IN TRIESTE

by DOUGLAS RUTHERFORD

I stepped straight into trouble that night . . . As if witnessing a murder was not enough, I had to meet Maddalena. And she was a girl who lived on trouble

THE ROAD WAS FRESHLY SURFACED and built for speed. I'd had a long day's motoring and was ready for my supper. I put my foot harder on the accelerator and listened to the rising hum of my tyres on the asphalt. I could see ahead of me the lights of Trieste climbing up the side of the hill. From the slope above, the huge lighthouse built to commemorate the dead of the first World War swung its beam regularly over the harbour and sea. Far to the right were the lights of the fishing fleet at anchor, looking like some phantom town poised between sky and water.

I was paying too much attention to the magic of the scene and not enough to the road. An imperious blast on the horn of a car behind brought me to my senses. I pulled over to the right, glancing in the driving mirror. A car with blazing headlights was bearing down fast. I was frankly surprised to find anyone travelling faster than I. The machine went past with a roar and a storm of tyres. I prepared to give chase and let him see what my experimental Jaguar could do.

What happened next interfered slightly with my plans. The other car was about a hundred yards ahead of me. I recognized it as a Lancia by its stumpy tail. It was caught by the beam of my headlights, until I realized I must be dazzling the driver. I was just about to put my foot on the dipper when the rear door of the car in front opened. The wind whipped it back against the mudguard. A man's form leapt from the interior on to the verge of the road. The funny thing was that he did leap. He didn't seem to have fallen. The speed of the Lancia was so great that he struck the road at an angle and went rolling over and over for about twenty yards.

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

I stood on everything and stopped just short of him. The Lancia pulled up about two hundred yards ahead.

There was a very nasty sensation in the pit of my stomach as I stepped out of the car. The man who had jumped was not a pleasant sight. He was terribly cut about the head by the little sharp stones at the roadside. His face must have been quite unrecognizable even to anyone who knew him. But he was still alive. He was groaning and writhing about on the rough surface.

Two men had got out of the Lancia. They came trotting towards me, screwing up their eyes against the glare from my lights. They weren't exactly the type I'd choose to be marooned on a desert island with. They were both young, one in shirt sleeves and the other

Continued on page 26

Uncle Ho versus the Playboy King

HARRY HOPKINS sums up his reports from Indo-China with the strange stories of two remarkable men—Bao-Dai, the luxury-loving Emperor, and Ho-Chi-Minh, the lean and hunted rebel

Bao-Dai at a cocktail party in Paris. Some say he is just a French puppet. Those who know the "Night Club Emperor" believe that his fast living is a façade for some deep game

SAIGON

THE FLAGS WERE OUT THE day I landed in Hanoi. The flags were everywhere, bold, handsome flags, three red lines through a field of orange, a brave new flag for an ancient people's new beginning. It was *la fête de l'unité nationale*—on the 149th anniversary of the mounting of the Dragon Throne by the first great emperor, Gia-Long.

Streamers fluttered across the streets and over the crowds that milled around the Petit Lac, thronging the little outdoor cafés that clustered along its shores, lighting their incense sticks at its venerable shrines. Down the walls, like gigantic orange caterpillars, crawled the long, curving outline of the new-old land of Viet-Nam. And from the florid stucco façades of the Hotel de Ville and the enormous Opera stared out—a hundred times larger than life—the face of a young man who had a look somehow faintly suggestive of a benevolent rabbit.

At the post office counters French Army men and Viet-Namese, eager philatelists, jostled to buy up the new issue—the first stamps of "independent" Viet-Nam, the first stamps of Viet-Nam's very own. And from the frame of the three-piastre stamp gazed out again the mild features of the same young man, this time with a name—*Sa Majesté* Bao-Dai. Thirteenth in the line of Nguyen emperors from the great Gia-Long, Bao-Dai, whose name means "Guardian of Greatness," but whom others have called the "Night Club Emperor," is a young man who has a date with destiny he may or may not keep.

But thirty miles outside Hanoi, outside any other town in Viet-Nam, another name, another face, a very different face, appeared; the name painted—and half scratched out perhaps—on the walls of empty villages, the face on badly printed leaflets sewn into the linings of men's shirts, or staring with fanatic eyes from currency notes of enormous denomination that are the small change of the village shops. It was the long, ascetic face of Ho-Chi-Minh, "Uncle Ho," the Viet-Minh—anti-government—leader, whom most Viet-Namese, even when they fight against him, venerate as the "Liberator" and father of his country.

Bao-Dai and Ho-Chi-Minh—a French-educated emperor of thirty-eight and a hunted professional revolutionary of fifty-seven, two faces, two names, two sets of slogans. . . . In South-East Asia, where history is made by personalities and not by parties, the troubled present and uncertain future of the great land mass of Indo-China—its gateway—is wrapped up in the stories and characters of these two men. Remarkable enough stories.

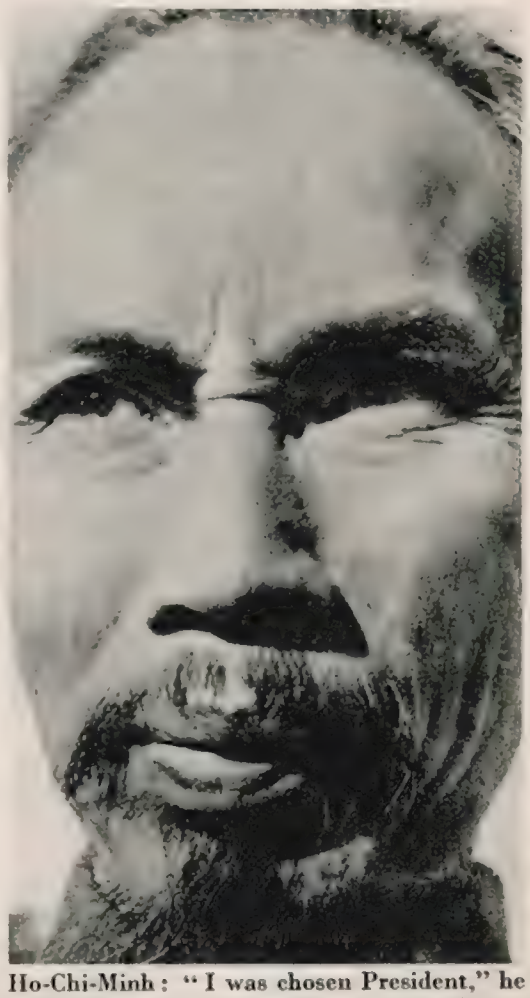
Ho-Chi-Minh was born Nguyen-tat-Thanh, on January 15, 1894, the son of a minor official in a village near Vinh to the south of Tonkin. Vinh, which is still a Viet-Minh stronghold, had long been famed as a hotbed of nationalism. Young Ho-Chi-Minh saw his brother and sister sentenced to years of jail for their part in the fight for independence. At the age of eighteen he shipped as a "bearer" aboard a Messageries Maritimes liner bound for America and Europe, taking for himself the name of Nguyen-ai-Quoc, which means Nguyen the Patriot.

In The Emperor's Palace

In its own genre, Bao-Dai's story is equally classic. He was born in 1913 within the thick, high walls of the Imperial City of Hué, which Emperor Gia-Long built, in imitation of Pekin, at a secluded spot in Central Annam to screen his dynasty from the barbarian French and their thrusting Western world.

I stood a few days ago in the great red-and-yellow Throne Hall at Hué, and looked out across the wide courtyard where nine successive stones marked the places where the nine degrees of mandarins would arrange themselves—each in his proper rank—to receive the bidding of the Son of Heaven.

Beyond lay the Hall of the Ancestors, two long lines of rich red altars in the dimness, each with



Ho-Chi-Minh: "I was chosen President," he said, "because I had nothing—no family, no fortune and only one suit, which I'm wearing"

In town and village huge portraits of Bao-Dai, like this one in Saigon, stare down at passers-by

its pile of tablets recording the history of the reign, each with its personal relics enshrined in their golden caskets, each with its offerings, commemorating emperors who had ruled and passed. Outside, in the courtyard, stood nine immense bronze urns, each finely sculpted with symbolic figures, tigers and cannon and growing rice, each of the first six bearing the names of two vanished emperors. On the seventh there was still a vacant space, the space for Bao-Dai.

The urns were nine because there are four seasons and five elements—that was the sort of fixed, predetermined world into which the child, Bao-Dai was born, the year before Sarajevo. It was all exquisitely formalized: there was an avenue of large houses for ministers, behind a street of somewhat smaller houses for their deputies, two houses to each minister's house, and behind lay another street of yet smaller houses for the principals, four to each deputy's house.

Wards Off Evil Spirits

Two miles beyond the royal city, across the "River of Perfumes," rises a rectangular mountain—"the Screen of the King"—the screen which every Viet-Namese house has in front of its door to keep the evil spirits from penetrating to the altar of the ancestors. On a line drawn from the centre of the mountain stands the "Gate of the Sun," through which only the king could enter. In front of the Gate of the Sun, on the same line, stands the small Pavilion of Edicts where the royal laws were proclaimed; behind the Gate of the Sun, the same line bisects the Hall of the Ancestors, crosses the court of the mandarins, and fixes the position of the Dragon Throne.

From this petrified Confucian world—already crumbling everywhere else—Bao-Dai was plucked at the age of nine and plunged into the vortex of Paris. His father, the Emperor Khai Dinh, took him there—the first voyage to Europe by his dynasty. To the former French Governor in whose charge he placed his son he said: "I bring you a schoolboy. Make of him what you will."

Thereupon Khai Dinh returned to Viet-Nam, and three years later, died. At the foot of his tomb—now in Viet-Minh hands—were buried his treasured French acquisitions: a toothbrush, a vacuum flask and an alarm clock.

Living in Paris at this time, in a garret in the seventeenth arrondissement, was another young Annamite of great intelligence and charm who eked out a living as a photographer's retoucher. In the Club du Faubourg and the political and literary circles he frequented, he was known as "*le petit Monsieur Ferdinand,*" editor, among other things, of *The Outcast*, a newspaper designed to rally the oppressed millions of the French Colonial Empire.

A friend of Léon Blum, he attended the famous conference of the French Socialists at Tours where the party split in its support of the Second and Third International. The Left-Wing champions of the Third International hived off to become the Communist Party of France. Among them was "*le petit M. Ferdinand,*" later to be known—among many other names—as Ho-Chi-Minh ("He Who Shines").

For Bao-Dai, too, the world was changing fast. The "Guardian of Greatness," the offspring of the "Son of Heaven," was receiving the liberal Republican education of France—a many-sided education. He learned to play ping-pong, to know wine and to appreciate the French cuisine; he absorbed, no doubt, by precept and example, the French conception of "*l'amour*"; he wore a tweed sports coat and flannels, used French perfumes, and played tennis with Henri Cochet. He became, in his person, that thing so beloved of French colonial theorists: a "synthesis" of cultures. A quite remarkable synthesis!

Meanwhile, more single-mindedly, Ho-Chi-Minh pursued his own self-education in the techniques of international revolution. From Moscow, whence he had gone as a delegate to the permanent committee of the International Peasantry, he moved on to Canton, to serve as an interpreter with Borodin and the Russian counsellors to the Chinese revolution. When, in 1927, Chiang Kai-shek turned furiously on the Communist wing, Ho-Chi-Minh slipped away.

From then on he lived the strange, dedicated life of the international revolutionary, coming and going, living from hand to mouth, always just a jump ahead of the police, plotting and failing and plotting again. "His greatest gifts," says the writer Robert Payne, "were silence and invisibility." But as the rumours of his sudden appearances spread among the embittered and repressed nationalists of Viet-Nam, his reputation grew and his name became a legend.

A Price On His Head

In 1932, when the nineteen-year-old Bao-Dai, the "synthesis" duly completed, returned to the walled imperial city to ascend the Dragon Throne, Ho-Chi-Minh—not quite quick enough for once—was languishing in a Hongkong jail with a French price of 50,000 piastres on his head. Bao-Dai, too, found himself scarcely at peace with his world. A product now of Republican, egalitarian France, he found himself in a world where men ran to hide their faces when the Sovereign passed by; liberal and progressive-minded, he found himself hemmed in by mandarins for whom everything in the world had been fixed and decided by ancient precedent.

But if life was not in some ways particularly satisfactory, in a French colonial territory like Indo-China there was no shortage of distractions. It had, in fact, long been an item of Viet-Minh propaganda that the French in Indo-China deliberately sapped the nationalist movement by the "politics of corruption." Now began the period of hectic sport, tiger-shooting, casinos, fast sports cars, night clubs, and the conducting of dance bands. To a journalist who once referred to his many women friends, Bao-Dai retorted: "My grandfather had 125 wives and 300 children. I have a few mistresses. So what?"

But the blast of the trumpets, all the sycophantic chatter of the cafés, could not shut out from Bao-Dai the tragedy of his country, which from the very moment of its conquest by the French had scarcely ceased to struggle against the bitter yoke.

Eastern Devil's Island

Said the proclamation sent to the French Admiral who in 1862 took over Saigon: "As the horse differs from the buffalo, so do we from you. We will avenge the injuries inflicted on our Emperor and we will die for him. The conflict will be long, but we are acting in accordance with the laws of Heaven." Not the least of the patriots were the emperors—one at least of whom was exiled. And it is said that Bao-Dai, true to that tradition, fought obstinate battles with French officials, was deliberately rude to them, subsidized from his personal revenues the families of Viet-Namese political prisoners.

But repression continued. While, in London, Gandhi was sitting at the Round Table Conference or hobnobbing with Lord Irwin, in Indo-China every nationalist movement was labelled "Communism" and violently repressed. The penal island of Poulo Condor, off the coast of Cochin-China, the Devil's Island of the East, with a similar reputation, steadily filled up.

In 1939 a larger tragedy supervened. But

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Lieutenant Hornblower

JOHN BULL has secured exclusive serial rights of *Lieutenant Hornblower*, a *new* full-length *Hornblower* novel by C. S. Forester, as yet unpublished in Great Britain.

Written in response to requests from readers all over the world, the latest *Hornblower* novel is a magnificent story of seagoing adventure, set in this famous hero's early days in the Royal Navy.

The first long instalment, with brilliant illustrations by William Little, will appear shortly. Watch out for further details next week.

To avoid missing a single instalment of this eagerly awaited publishing event, you should place a regular order for John Bull with your newsagent now.

The eyes that can spot a fish splash a mile away. Jacob Trautman is famed for his big catches

Jacob fishes a fortune -the backbreaking way

by ERIC H. BELCHER

A lobster-catching day in his life begins at two a.m. By nightfall he's dog tired and sore handed—but much richer

CAPE TOWN

ONE SUNNY MORNING a few weeks ago, a Cape Town resident drove the twelve rocky miles to Hout Bay, one of South Africa's fishing villages, to see a land agent about the purchase of some building plots. The interview finally reached the point at which all that remained was the actual financing of the deal. The Cape Town man wanted to raise a loan. "Try Jacob Trautman," said the agent. "But you'll have to wait until the fishing fleet comes in. He's a skipper. They're the people with all the money these days."

While the popular idea that fishermen are earning fabulous sums is exaggerated, the South African fishing industry is certainly enjoying a rapidly increasing prosperity. Jacob Trautman himself admits that he has managed to put a few pounds away—"enough to make anyone a loan, on good security of course," he says, with a shrewd twinkle. But he is very emphatic about there not being any easy money in fishing—especially not in Jacob's main job of catching crawfish, the delicately flavoured Cape lobster. Jacob's fortune has been earned by hard work, hauling out of the water by hand the thousands upon thousands of crawfish which go to make up his yearly catch.

His work is an important money-earner for the Union of South Africa, however, for his catch went to swell a total of 25,000,000 crawfish caught and landed last year. This is only a part of an industry which is grossing £8,250,000 annually, and is still growing. From a dozen ports boats are putting out to fish the Cape banks and returning with their holds filled with fish that include strange-sounding Afrikaans names like maasbankers, steenbras, kingklip and stompneus.

Hout Bay fishermen, although their methods are those of their fathers, have nothing to complain of in the matter of surroundings. Jacob Trautman's house is perched on the mountainside with a view of one of the loveliest bays in the world. At the two horns of the bay the mountains come sheer down to the water's edge. Between lies a stretch of dazzling white sand, and behind it a valley as green and fertile as any in England. The only drawback from Jacob's point of view is that he rarely has any time to enjoy it. When conditions are right for crawfishing—a breath of wind and no current—the fleet is so busy that a skipper is home only for a few hours' sleep. "Sometimes my children don't see me for a couple of weeks," says Jacob.

At times like these, Jacob leaves his house at two in the morning. He wears an old tweed jacket and a pair of slightly oily grey flannel trousers. His feet are bare, but his head is covered with a rather battered felt hat, stained with sweat and crusted salt. From his front stoep he takes a quick look at the weather. If conditions are right, the sea is just lapping the rocks below with a dull edge of foam. There is a slight haze through which Kommetjie Light, eight miles away, flashes with a golden nimbus. He climbs into his car and drives round the valley to the fishing harbour at the other side of the bay. Here his first job is to go round the cottages and knock up his coloured crew. His boat is anchored in the harbour, and the men row out to it in a dinghy. Before they can sail, there is a couple of hours of hard work, sorting and baiting the nets, overhauling the diesel engine.

The Fleet Sets Sail

About four o'clock the boats of the fleet put to sea, rounding the harbour jetty one by one to begin their three-hour sail to the principal crawfish grounds along the reefs off Cape Point. Once at the grounds there begins what Jacob says is the hardest of all fishing jobs, the catching of the crawfish. His forty-foot boat carries three dinghies. Each dinghy holds two men and eight nets. A crawfish net is cone-shaped, with a stout hoop of steel round the open end. The bait, a piece of stockfish, is suspended in the open end and the hoop is attached to 150 feet of rope with a cork float at the other end. While one man rows, the other lowers the nets one by one into the water, until all eight are in line marked by the gently swaying floats.

Now the really backbreaking work begins. The dinghy is rowed back to the beginning of the line and the first net is hauled in again. By this time there are crawfish in the mouth of the net attracted by the bait. The net must be raised sufficiently fast to keep them trapped—no easy task through 150 feet of water. Once the net is aboard, it must be emptied, baited again, and lowered. Then on to the next one, and so on down the line. Up and down the line of nets the dinghy goes, while the hot sun rises higher in the sky and the day wears on. In a good day, one dinghy will take up to 2,000 crawfish.

It's hard, tiring work, and there can be no pauses or the bait would be wasted. By late afternoon, the hold of the little boat is full. The dinghies are hauled in and the fleet sails back to harbour. There's still the work of landing the catch to keep skipper and crew occupied until seven or eight o'clock. Then home for supper, and if they're lucky they'll be in bed by nine, only to begin all over again at two o'clock the next morning.

Catch Sent To America

For this work the fishermen are paid a flat rate of 17s. a hundred crawfish by the company that owns the fleet. A skipper receives an extra commission of 3s. a hundred for all fish landed from his boat. Houses, boats and fuel are supplied by the company. When the fish are landed, they go to the factory, where they are shelled and cleaned by coloured girls. The bulk of the catch is packed in ice and exported to the U.S.A., where it fetches 6s. 10d. a pound. The remainder of the catch is boiled and canned.

If Jacob and his crew could rely on catching crawfish every day of the year, they would all earn big sums. But, says Jacob, "There are not above an average of two days in a week

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A woman to fear

by ***DUDLEY HOYS***

ILLUSTRATED BY R. O. ROSE

Old Garthwaite had his doubts about her; the vicar was frankly terrified. Yet she could be conquered

THE STORY OF MISS VENDER was told to me by an old man called Josh. At the time it happened, Josh had been employed only for a few years as sparetime verger and gravedigger in the village churchyard. It was easy to get on with the parson, Mr. Barley. A kind, good-tempered man. The only thing that riled Mr. Barley was when people wanted to put up memorials in marble, or leave artificial wreaths in glass cases.

"Fairly hated marble, did parson, black or white. Reckoned it didn't go wi' a place like this. As for they wreaths, he said they no more fitted in here than any o' us would fit in Piccadilly, London."

Anyhow, by persistence and persuasion the parson managed to keep the churchyard as he wanted it. In those days artificial wreaths were still popular, and he held them at bay by occasionally giving a sermon against them. Who were they, he would ask his congregation, to challenge the beauty of the flowers provided by Providence?

In all seasons the dale offered its treasures of the earth. In spring there were primroses and violets on the banks, and the snowy whiteness of the bird-cherry. In summer there were the roses and a host of other flowers from their farm and cottage gardens. In autumn, chrysanthemums could be had for the picking. In winter, the hollies gleamed with their bright red berries. Did they dare to believe that these were less lovely than false flowers stuck together under a glass covering? In any case, frost cracked the glass, and the weather got in, and the so-called flowers turned black, a messy insult to the memories they were supposed to be honouring.

Gradually, he converted the dale to his way of thinking. Folk stopped approaching him about marble, and confined their tributes to natural flowers. He was as pleased as Punch about it. At last he could be sure of preserving his sacred plot from trappings that offended his eye and his beliefs. And then he met Miss Vender.

The trouble began in 1899 with a local farmer called John Garthwaite. Garthwaite was then a man of seventy, a bachelor, and running a nice little fell-farm of 400 Herdwicks and half a dozen breeding rams. An ancient widow, a Mrs. Sim, who had been coming in to tidy up the house and do a bit of cooking, had to give up because of rheumatics. Garthwaite had to find somebody else, particularly as the doctor had warned him to go slow, on account of his heart.

Now, living at the other end of the dale was a Miss Lavinia Vender, a woman in her forties. Her father, the late schoolmaster, had left her a few hundreds invested in Home Rails, and she had to eke out a living by going out sewing, at one and sixpence a day. With her cold, stubborn way, her long, hard face, and her rat-trap of a mouth, she was unpopular. Women called her a cat, and the dale youths, who were ruder, called her a polecat. However, Garthwaite had heard she was a hard worker, and offered her the job of coming in as a daily housekeeper.

Miss Vender accepted. Her best friend, if she had one, could never have described her as attractive, but she had a good head of hair, and her cooking was savoury, and old Garthwaite began to think there was something in this business of having somebody around to put his slippers in front of the fire, whisk away his shirts when they were stained with sheep-grease and smit, and wash them like new. He also liked the idea of someone listening to his talk about clipping and dipping and the like, as if she had never before heard such sweet music.

Cautious as he was, he reached the stage of saying to her one day: "You're a gey fine woman."

In a voice much less wintry than her usual tone, Miss Vender said: "I do my best."

"I'm sure o' that."

The tatie pots she cooked for him grew even more appetizing, the apple cakes and drop-scones even more toothsome. Out of her savings she bought a new dress from the travelling draper, and on the first Sunday she wore it, old Garthwaite patted her arm. She almost smiled. His farm and furniture and stock would be worth £1,000, and he had no near relatives. If she married him, he was not likely to bother her for long. After all, he was rising seventy-one, with a troublesome heart.

She played her cards skilfully. Several times she persuaded him to come to church with her. That, she felt, would show the dale which way the wind was blowing, and if it didn't exactly compromise him, at least it would be pushing him a step farther towards her object.

On one of these occasions the parson mentioned from the pulpit how gratified he was that the parish no longer hankered after marble memorials and artificial wreaths. Miss Vender spoke to him about it afterwards. Very privately, she considered herself a cut above the farming community. As the daughter of a schoolmaster, with scarcely a trace of Cumbrian accent, she saw no reason to accept a parson's tastes as superior to her own.

"Wild flowers," she told him, "wither in a few days. There's no dignity about them."

The parson, who was chubby, with white hair and eyes like a spaniel's, only blue, smiled in a gently protesting fashion. "I fear I disagree. Their simplicity is true dignity."

His secret thoughts about her were far from flattering. He thanked Providence that none of her relatives had been buried here, or he might still be battling to keep those abominable glass cases out of his garden of peace. An obstinate, mulish woman, he decided, who would be almost as relentless as a stoat after a rabbit, once she had set her mind on anything.

Now, it may be that old Garthwaite, too, had summed up this trait in her character, and realized that he would do better for himself by not marrying her. At any rate, the word was never spoken. He talked freely to her of his affairs, in a way that convinced her she would figure largely in his will. But somehow the vital question remained unput, and then, one hot August evening, the old man died quite suddenly. He had been out on the fells with two neighbours who had lent him a hand to gather the sheep for the second dipping. Likely that strenuous scramble up rock and scree and breath-taking slopes was too much for his heart. While having his dinner he slumped quietly back in his chair.

She came walking up the

A LOCAL crony, Tom Hollin, took over responsibility for the necessary arrangements. He and Miss Vender made up the list of all those to be invited to the funeral.

"Where d'you think 'twud be best to have tea at? The Fox?"

Miss Vender nodded. "That would be the most convenient."

"Ay," agreed Tom. "Ham?"

"Certainly. Ham, bread and butter, tea-cakes, and rum-butter."

"Any fancies?"

"On no account," said Miss Vender firmly. "On occasions of this sort, fancy cakes are disrespectful."

"Ay," said Tom, uncertainly. "Ay."

"We must get the cards printed at once. I suppose we should inform one or two of his very distant relatives. And then his lawyer at Whitehaven, Mr. Mason, must be invited to attend."

Tom wagged an approving head. "Ay. Mebbe he'll elect to read will after the tea."

Miss Vender's agate eyes flickered. "That," she said, "is not unusual."

The funeral service was fixed for two o'clock on the Friday. Tom arranged to drive the farm-cart conveying his old friend from Fold End. Half a dozen men were to accompany it. All other mourners would go straight to the church.

At ten minutes to two the little building was nearly full. But a few stragglers were still appearing and the Reverend Mr. Barley stood by the porch, waiting. It was a perfect afternoon, and the graveyard was a warm, dreamy little corner of grey and green, unspoiled, unblemished. He beamed at it and murmured, "It's never looked more beautiful."

There was the sound of wheels in the narrow

h with a kind of slow, smug dignity. The vicar heard himself groan. He did his honest best not to hope she would fall and smash the thing to smithereens

lane outside the gate. He poked his head beyond the porch. What he saw was not a farm-cart, but a trap. Out of it stepped Miss Vender, swathed in black, with yards of crêpe. The driver of the trap leaned forward and handed something down to her, and at the sight of it the parson turned cold with shock. It was an enormous artificial wreath, sickeningly white beneath its glass cover.

Her arms stretched wide to carry it, she came walking with a kind of slow, smug dignity up the granite-chipping path. The glass caught the sun, and sent out vulgar winkings and flashings. The white flowers beneath reminded him of the icing on a showy wedding cake. He heard himself groan, and tried his honest utmost not to hope that she would trip and let the whole thing smash to smithereens on the granite.

Dismally he watched her coming on, without the faintest sign of having an accident. She drew level with him, gave him a nod that combined dignity, suitable grief and challenge, and went on into the church with her triumphant tribute, where she moved solemnly up to the front pew, and there propped it at her side.

Throughout the service he did his best to forget personal feelings. It was difficult, sorely difficult. The sunshine, streaming through the south window, seemed to concentrate on that assertive glass case.

Now the service was ending. They were going out to the graveyard. They were standing in the sunshine, looking down. There were wreaths of roses, lilies, bunches of mauve sweet peas, asters, hosts of flowers with their silky, curving petals stirring in the breeze. And there was Miss Vender, stooping down and putting her great glass case in the most prominent position, turning this natural garden into a nasty grotto.

The Reverend Mr. Barley groaned again in spirit. Exhortations and arguments would be wasted on her. Month after month it would remain there, until disintegrated by time and the weather, and then she would probably replace it with another. There came to him the dim and yet awful temptation of taking it away by night and hiding it, but he knew he could never bring himself to do it.

Fifty-eight of them, including the parson and the lawyer, trooped along to tea at The Fox. The ham was good, having been cured lavishly with brown sugar. The rum-butter might have lightened the heart of the worst pessimist; the finest Jamaica rum had gone into it, and the flavouring of nutmeg was exactly right.

After the first twenty minutes, nearly everybody began to talk freely. The exceptions were the lawyer, a long-nosed leathery man who sat there looking attentive and shrewd, Miss Vender, who never could have stooped to geniality, in any event, and Mr. Barley, still nursing his private sorrow and wondering what could be his best tactics in tackling Miss Vender.

At five o'clock the lawyer stood up. "I shall be reading the will shortly," he said. "I should be obliged if those concerned will step into that inner room." He named the Reverend Mr. Barley, Tom Hollin, George Leece, who was a second cousin of the late lamented, and Miss Vender.

A few minutes later, the small group sat around an oak table. Out of his bag the lawyer drew a document inscribed in copperplate. He cleared his throat, and began.

"This is the last Will and Testament. . . ."

A hush descended upon them. The first to break it was Mr. Barley. "Most generous," he murmured, as he learned that the sum of £100 had been left to his church. Miss Vender's eyes narrowed in disapproval at the news. They grew narrower still at the mention of the next legacy, £200 to "my old friend, Thomas Hollin." But she was unable to stop them opening with shock and amazement when it transpired that the remainder of the estate went to George Leece, of Bleng Farm, Cockermouth. Her grim lips parted to let out a sort of hissing sound.

Glancing over the top of his glasses at her, the lawyer said: "There is a codicil. 'To Miss Lavinia Vender, of Beck Cottage, Lower Iredale, I bequeath the pair of blue china vases with gold rims, as a token of my esteem.'"

Once more Miss Vender's mouth became a rat-trap. Her eyes like daggers, she pushed back her chair, got up, and walked out of the room.

"Tut, tut," said the parson, with sympathy.

"Ay," said Tom Hollin, "that's the worst o' expectin' summat and gettin' nowt."

They chatted with the lawyer for a short while, shook hands, and went their various ways home, the parson using the short cut across the fields to his vicarage.

Entering his front garden, he sat down on an old tree stump, gazing across at the church and the graveyard. To think that one artificial wreath could ruin his tranquillity! It really was too bad. To think that day in and day out he must endure its sickly, artificial fussiness!

Somebody in black was walking down the church lane. It was Miss Vender. From behind the cover of his leafy trees, he watched her curiously. She opened the gate, and moved towards that carpet of fresh flowers. Here she paused, and stooped.

Even at that distance, Mr. Barley could see her face clearly under the brilliance of the early evening sun. He could see the whiteness of her teeth showing, and the expression about her eyes. Her hands went out and lifted the glass case from the ground. Turning, she walked with it from the graveyard, across to the bank of the river.

And there, holding it on high, she paused for a moment, and then, with a gesture of uncontrolled fury, flung it on to the stones by the river. He could hear the tinkling crash of the glass, and see bits of the stiff, broken flowers floating downstream.

"Dear, dear!" In a kind of gratified protest he raised his hands and his eyes to heaven. "How dreadful!" he whispered, "but how very satisfactory."

THE END

Part 6 of JEAN NICOL'S fascinating memories of a famous hotel

A Savoy chef's way with rations

Cooking a delicious meal on wartime rations came easy to François Latry, Savoy *maître chef* and inventor of Woolton Pie. He remembered his mother's advice—waste nothing

WHEN SIR GEORGE REEVES-SMITH died in the early part of the war, he left £55,000 in Great Britain and other assets abroad. There were three special bequests: the original drafts and notes relating to *Imperial Palace*, written by Arnold Bennett, were left to the chairman, Rupert D'Oyly Carte; his fishing rods and tackle to Mr. Thornewill, a director, and his son; and £100 to the chief engineer at the Savoy, white-haired Frederick Pay. His responsibilities as managing director were inherited by Mr. Hugh Wontner, a tall, pale man in his early thirties, the son of Arthur Wontner, the actor.

These responsibilities, heavy enough in peace-time, were made trebly so by the war and all its difficulties and restrictions. The normal life of a great international hotel like the Savoy was changed almost overnight. Authority was needed for all sorts of essential replacements; licences were necessary for repairs, redecorations, renewals, linen and soap. There was the confetti of returns and forms in connection with food, and above all the complications of finance in maintaining the whole structure of the business. In addition, as managing director of the Savoy, Mr. Wontner was often expected by the members of the Hotels and Restaurants Association to be their chief ambassador.

Mr. Wontner seemed to be in daily contact with Government offices: if it was not the Ministry of Labour, then it was the Ministry of Food. Here he acted as a kind of unofficial adviser, and it was the irony of fate that the famous five shilling meal order, which was more severe to the Savoy than to almost any other hotel, was largely thought out by him, after it had been decided by the Government to introduce some form of restriction.

Most of the able-bodied young men had already volunteered or been called up, and their places taken by older men or by women. For the first time since the first World War, waitresses appeared in the grill and restaurant, and the sanctity of the restaurant kitchens was invaded by pretty, curly-headed Lilian Rose, who learned to prepare that well-known vegetable dish, Woolton Pie, under the benign gaze of M. François Latry, whose wartime recipe it was.

Of all the wartime restrictions in the hotel world, rationing undoubtedly produced the worst headaches. Hotels were rationed to a penny-worth of meat a person; fish and poultry were as scarce as they were to the ordinary shopper, and when offal went on the ration, too, every meal became a miracle of planning.

Two-edged Question

If, in my capacity of Press Relations Officer, I answered the routine newspaper question of "How does the Savoy manage on its rations?" with, "Well, we do our best, and there's always a choice of two or three dishes," there were angry letters to the editor. If, on the other hand, I said, "We find it very difficult and most of our dishes are made-up ones containing a high proportion of vegetables," it was a certain way to discourage diners.

One morning I took a visiting American to the restaurant kitchens to see for himself. On a bench along the right-hand wall sat a number of *sous-chefs* eating their lunch: bowls of broth, long French rolls, and bottles of pale English ale. Before the war, each chef and cook was issued with half a bottle of red wine to wash down his midday meal, and I wondered how they enjoyed this latest manifestation of austerity. As we turned the corner into the kitchens, I felt my face flush at the sudden wave of oven heat. The noisy chatter of many tongues broke round my ears and through the steam I saw the bobbing of white chefs' caps.

Opposite me, through an open door, I saw a coloured man plucking chickens, the soft feathers floating down to mingle with the sawdust on the floor. Beside him a slim Chinese methodically sliced carrots in glowing discs. A group of commis cooks argued loudly in French as they jostled before a notice board hung with the day's orders. Above the clamour I heard the dominating cascade of French which I knew came from the voluble rotund genius who presided over this seething domain. He turned and I caught his eye. "*Bon jour*, M. Latry," I said.

The *maître chef des cuisines* not only has to see that his kitchens produce well-balanced menus, exquisitely cooked, but also that they show a profit. As great chefs are men with artistic temperaments, it is not often that they are good managers as well. To them each dish should be a poem of perfection; nothing else matters. In the early days of the Savoy, M. Joseph, the *maître chef* of the restaurant kitchens, was lured to America by William K. Vanderbilt to be his personal chef. But Mr. Vanderbilt had the indelicacy to be late for lunch several times and once, expressing a desire for corned beef and cabbage, was referred by M. Joseph to the gardener. Then the outraged chef packed his bags and returned to the Savoy.

Apart from the *maître chef* and his principal assistants, there are a number of under-chefs. There is the chef who makes the sauces, then a soup chef, a roast chef, a fish chef, an entrée chef, a pastry chef, and a chef who makes the sweets. Each of them has assistant cooks and commis cooks, who are often young men working their way through the hotel business. A chef never peels a vegetable or washes a plate or does any of the tedious tasks of cooking. When he wants chopped parsley or grated onions, a commis is at his side with them in neat piles on a spotless tray. In his kitchens, the *maître chef* is king. Even the general manager treads warily.

M. Latry's face creased into a welcoming smile and we followed him on a tour of inspection. "My mother was very economical," he said, leading us to a vast, steaming cauldron of soup over which an elderly chef was bending with an outsized ladle. "She taught me never to waste anything in the kitchen, and now all her lessons come back to me. Do you know what this soup is made from? Fish heads. Before the war I would not give them to my cat, but now I use them and the result," he blew a kiss into the air, "delicious!"

The Art Of Making Do

We followed him through a tiled archway into a cooler room beyond. Here were rows of neat white dishes of hors d'œuvres. When I looked closely I saw that they were all, with the exception of a small portion of herring roes, made from vegetables. "Alas, no onions," said Latry, indicating the potato salad, "but I decorate it with chopped chives; no tomatoes, but the small flowers of the cauliflower in French dressing are as good, and small leeks are even better."

We walked from the kitchen down some stone steps, past the plate room where washing-up machines turned ceaselessly and elderly men in white aprons with their sleeves rolled well above their elbows polished an endless stream of cutlery. At the bottom of the stairs, in a room dusted with flour and kept cool by a large fan in the ceiling, we found the pastry chef. He was rolling a large mound of dough into a thin paste, while an assistant cut out thin circles and filled them with slivers of apple glazed with apricot jam. These were placed on flat greased trays and

Jean Nicol (right) watches Mrs. Bannerman, the Savoy's head florist, arrange a table decoration

On Pancake Day it is the custom for the *maître chef* to prepare pancakes for his staff. Here Lilian Rose, first of the wartime women kitchen hands, samples François Latry's cooking

fed into a vast oven at the end of the room.

"How do you get enough fat for all this pastry?" I asked, recalling grumbles from my mother's kitchen. "Ah," replied Latry, "that is my great success. Before the war we used only the breast and wings of chicken. Now I make tournedos from the legs, and the skin and fat pieces which we did not use I reduce over a hot fire and strain and then have a beautiful, clear, yellow fat."

We returned through the main kitchens to the restaurant. Luncheon was starting and the *sous-chefs* were gathering behind their gleaming silver hot-plates, waiting for the rush of waiters calling their orders.

One of the most sought-after positions in the hotel world is that of manager of the Savoy restaurant. On his release from internment, Santarelli returned to the Savoy, but his death some two years later left the post vacant. Not only must the restaurant manager have charm and dignity, good manners and the type of personality that makes clients wish to return again and again to his restaurant, but he must be able to control his polyglot collection of waiters and, above all, be on good terms with the *maitre chef*.

Eventually, after some preliminary gap-filling by old and new servants, the position fell to the Italian-born Armanda Bertuzzi, who had been discovered by Mr. Wontner working as head waiter in a London club. It is essential for a restaurant manager to have a name that is not only attractive but is easily pronounced and as easily remembered. Mr. Wontner suggested that the new manager should be known by his first name, slightly amended. So Amanda, the new restaurant manager, was born.

A naturalized British subject, black-haired, good-looking, Amanda is married to an Englishwoman. He speaks five languages, including impeccable English, has flashing eyes and a romantic smile, is adored by his staff and trusted by his clients—in fact, Amanda is in the great tradition of restaurant managers.

On his arrival at his office around eleven o'clock in the morning, he reads his mail, looks through the bookings for the day, allots the reserved tables, decides on the menus for meals which his clients have asked him to order. Then follows Amanda's morning conference with the *maitre chef des cuisines*, which covers not only the luncheon and dinner menus for the restaurant but also those for the private dining-rooms. Every restaurant manager has worked in the kitchens—not necessarily of the restaurant where he is employed—and knows exactly how every dish on the menu is cooked.

He must also know the vagaries and private fads of all his customers: that Lady B. is on a diet and disdains potatoes; that a certain actress eats raw cabbage and shredded carrot for her complexion; that a well-known industrial baron erupts in an alarming rash if he eats oysters; and that a prominent politician's dinner must always be preceded by soup and that, preferably, "le petit marmite."

Greetings From Band

Together, Amanda and the *maitre chef* plan the day's menus, deplore the lack of fresh meat, the absence of fresh butter and cream, and all the unrestricted abundance of the good old days. Then the chef sits down to his midday meal and Amanda returns to his office to investigate any problems, order flowers from the head florist, Mrs. Bannerman, for a wedding reception in a private room and telephone Carroll Gibbons reminding him of a twenty-first birthday party that night. He gives him the number of the table so that when the roll of drums precedes "I'm twenty-one today . . ." Carroll can turn and wave his baton with a smile of congratulation in the direction of the celebration.

Then, with a last look round the restaurant and a glance at the menu to see that it is all in order, Amanda is on duty for lunch. For two and a half hours he welcomes, advises, encourages and consoles his clients, warns, castigates or praises his staff, and then, and only then, can he sit down and eat.

Unlike the chef, who eats before his public arrives, Amanda waits until the blue smoke from the last departing cigar has wafted up the stairs to the front hall. Then he sits down alone in his office: not to steak and kidney pie or grilled chicken, but to spaghetti and a salad of lettuce and yellow pimentoes.

The restaurant manager has a minimum of four assistants, each of whom is responsible for his own area of the restaurant. Under them are a number of head waiters who are, in turn, responsible for four tables each. After the guest has been welcomed by Amanda or one of his assistants, he is led to his table, his order is taken by a head waiter, and he is served by a waiter who is known as a *chef de rang*. At the lowest end of the scale comes the commis waiter, who clears away the empty plates and, if he appears promising, is promoted to the next step: pouring coffee.

Too Late To Go Home

From mid-afternoon until seven o'clock the restaurant manager should lock his office door behind him and return home for a short rest, but it seldom works out that way. Sometimes it is a directorial summons that keeps him, or a conference with the head electrician concerning the exact location of a new spotlight, or the rehearsal of a cabaret turn; nearly always it is too late to go home, and his morning coat is exchanged for a dinner jacket and once again he is the smiling, welcoming host.

For most of my years at the Savoy, the head detective was a burly, red-headed giant named O'Donnell. He wore striped trousers, black coat, large silk stock and a stiff white collar starched to razor sharpness on which rested the rosy contours of his round and kindly face. He was known as "Bubbles."

During the war, one of his assistants was Mr. Meadows, of the twirling waxed moustaches. He had the job of stopping the "souvenir hunters" before they left the hotel and tactfully asking for the return of this property. At this, Meadows was a past-master. His complete lack of anger, pomposity or threats and the incipient gleam in his eye which seemed to say: "Now you naughty little thing, give that back to daddy at once," worked wonders.

"Blind" Hero Unmasked

It is the hotel detective, too, who must keep an eye open for the crooks who would like to make hotels their happy hunting ground but get scant chance to do so—the confidence tricksters, the jewel thieves and the petty cheats.

During the war an R.A.F. pilot in dark glasses felt his way into the American Bar and somebody helped him into a chair. He would not talk about himself, but said he had a yearning for some gay company. Jack Buchanan bought him drinks and took him out to dinner. Frances Day invited him to lunch the following day, and many other famous people showered him with invitations.

Then came the evening when he groped his way down the steps from the American Bar, across the hall and down the stairs to the gentlemen's cloakroom. His faltering progress was watched. A polite offer to lead him was refused. A few minutes later, the pilot, still with dark glasses, was seen to emerge from the cloakroom, walk quickly up the stairs, pause and then resume his slow, groping progress.

The police were called and the pilot, who was later prosecuted, confessed that by posing as a blind hero, he had been able to obtain all the luxury for which he craved.

***NEXT WEEK:** The glamorous wedding of tragic Carole Landis. Danny Kaye and the Mad Hatter's tea party*

THE TRIAL OF VICTORIA LAMARTINE

Continued from page 11

visited Major Thoseby in his room."

"Yes. That is what I meant to imply."

"I don't think he knows now what he did mean," said Macrea loudly to Mr. Rumbold.

* * *

Sergeant Walter Cleeve, of the Fingerprint Department at New Scotland Yard. (An extract only from his examination-in-chief by Mr. Trouncer, Mr. Claudian Summers's learned junior.)

"You took this knife for expert examination?"

"Yes."

"Would you tell us what you found?"

"Fingerprints and thumbprints were visible on the handle of the knife. It is a flat, wooden handle, and a very good surface for the recording of prints."

"Were these prints examined against prints taken from all the persons present in the hotel on March 14?"

"Yes."

"With what results?"

"Many of the fingerprints were old and so blurred as to be unidentifiable. I was able, however, to identify one set of three prints—prints of the middle finger, ring finger and little finger apparently—with the sample taken from the prisoner. There was also a clear print of the thumb. Also of the left hand, corresponding with the prisoner's thumb. I found in examination of the three fingerprints, sixteen, fourteen and sixteen points of agreement. In the thumb, twelve points. I have omitted a number of partial fingerprints in which four, five or six points of agreement were obtained."

"Were any of the prints identifiable with any other person in the hotel?"

"Yes. A set of right-hand finger- and thumbprints were identified as belonging to a Mrs. Morrison, a cook who comes in daily."

"Were the prints—the prisoner's and Mrs. Morrison's—clear and sharp?"

"No. It was necessary to photograph even those prints I have mentioned in oblique light to obtain a clear picture."

"One last question, Sergeant. Can you give an explanation of the consistent blurring of all the fingerprints you obtained?"

"Yes. There could be a number of explanations. Such a result might have been obtained by wiping the handle lightly with a cloth."

"We knew the moment we looked at each other that it was the best we could possibly do"

It was Macrea's turn. "Sergeant Cleeve," he began, "may I take that last point first? You use the word 'lightly.' It is not, I take it, at all *difficult* to clean fingerprints from a handle. A moderately vigorous polishing would do it?"

"Yes."

"And once it was done, none of your oblique rays and scientific tarradiddles will bring them up again?"

"Once they are gone they are gone."

"I am not criticizing you, Sergeant. I would like to say that I thought you gave your evidence very fairly. I should like to clear the air by saying that we do not deny that the three fingerprints and the thumbprint already mentioned—and no doubt many of the partial prints—were all made by the prisoner. Why should we deny it? It was a knife she used almost every day of her life. My point is this, however. You stated that *one* explanation of the blurring of the prints—the way their outlines were dragged in one direction—would be consistent with their being wiped across with a cloth."

"Yes."

"There might be other explanations?"

"Certainly."

"Can I put one to you? That after the prints were made the knife was used — vigorously used — by someone wearing a glove."

"Yes. That might produce the same effect."

"It is at least as probable as the explanation that the handle was wiped?"

"Yes."

"Now another point. Would you take the knife." The knife was handed to the witness. "Now Sergeant. Will you assist us by imagining that you are in the kitchen. You are preparing a meal. You are cutting up meat, or chopping parsley, or doing one or other of the things people do with the knife in a kitchen. Remember that the prisoner was left-handed in all her ordinary tasks. That's right. Use the edge of the box as a chopping block and show the jury." After a few seconds, Macrea went on: "Now, would you be good enough to reverse your grip and hold the knife in the manner already explained in evidence—with the point upwards. That is correct. Would you show it to the jury please? Now you find, do you not, that your fingers are in a very different position from what they were before?"

Macrea smiled genially and turned to the jury. "I hope you were able to observe," he said, "that when the sergeant held the knife for chopping or cutting—with the point, that is, straight out and the blade downwards—his thumb was the controlling factor. It was pressed very hard against the top of the right-hand side of the handle. If he had been using his right hand, it would have been the left-hand side, but the principle is the same. Once again, if you would be so good, Sergeant. You see what I mean? Now, when he holds the knife point upwards, for stabbing, the thumb hardly touches the wood at all. The handle is gripped in the crook of the fingers. Is that not so, Sergeant?"

"Well, yes. It is. The thumb might be touching the handle."

"Touching, but not pressing against it."

"That is correct."

"So that the presence of a clear thumbprint in conjunction with the three fingerprints suggests that those particular marks almost certainly *did* come there when the knife was used in the kitchen."

"I shouldn't have said that it was a certainty."

"But very probably."

"Well, as you put it, yes—probably."

"Thank you," said Macrea. "That is all—oh, no. Wait a minute. There was just one thing more."

Only Mr. Rumbold, who knew him so well, guessed that there was anything at all behind Macrea's casual manner. Mr. Rumbold had seen it too often to be deceived. The close of the main cross-examination. The witness getting ready to step out of the box, relaxing. The sudden last deadly question.

"I take it, Sergeant Cleeve, that you made a general inspection for fingerprints in the room? I mean, you didn't only examine the knife."

"Oh, no. We looked at everything."

"There was no lack of prints, I take it?"

"There certainly wasn't," said Sergeant Cleeve, with a smile. "We found prints which we identified as belonging to the deceased, the prisoner, Monsieur Sainte, Carnino, the last three occupants of the room, and a man who had been in two mornings before to see to the electric light."

"I see. Was there a fingerprint on the bell push?"

There was a moment of dead silence.

"No, sir," said Sergeant Cleeve, "there wasn't."

"I see," said Macrea. "Thank you."

The prosecuting counsel, Mr. Summers, re-examined the witness.

"Sergeant Cleeve. Two points that my learned friend has put to you—the absence of certain prints from the knife-handle and the blurring of existing prints. They would all equally be accounted for if—I only put it to you as a supposition—the prisoner had herself been wearing gloves at the time of the murder."

"Yes. That is so."

"Speaking as an expert, that would account for all these—er—phenomena."

"Yes."

"Thank you. That is all."

Macrea grinned gently. He thought that his cross-examination must have been unexpectedly effective if it had sufficed to lead so old a bird as Claudian Summers into so lightly spread a net.

Mr. Rumbold missed a good deal of the final cross-examination. He was thinking about a conversation which he had had that morning, before the court opened, with Macrea, in his chambers. They had sat there together for half an hour, in the sunlight under the rows and rows of King's Bench and Chancery law reports in leather bindings. They knew they had reached the storm centre.

"The prosecution case will be finished by lunchtime," Macrea had said. "The only important witness to come is Inspector Parridge. I'll take him as far as I can on the lines of prejudice. After that we shall have to see what we can make of it from our side."

"Have you decided what line to take?"

"Well, there are two lines. We can simply put the prisoner in the box to give her version of the story and trust her to come through the cross-examination. I think the jury'll like her. She's so patently honest. Then we'll go all out on a plea that the prosecution haven't proved their case. In short, that a number of other people could have murdered Thoseby, and the prisoner is by no means the most likely one of them."

"What's the alternative?"

"We suggest who *did* do the murder."

"All right," said Mr. Rumbold. "Let's do that. I think I know who did it, all right," he added.

"As a matter of fact," said Macrea, "so do I. But that's a very different thing from being able to prove it. However, let's look at the four candidates."

"Four?"

"Certainly. First, Mrs. Roper. She's a crook. She had plenty of opportunity. She could have stolen the knife."

"On the other hand," said Mr. Rumbold, "she had no ascertainable motive—and she doesn't look like a murderer. She's not the right calibre at all. A little crook—and an associate of little crooks. Not a killer."

"I agree," said Macrea. "Then we have Monsieur Sainte. Quite another proposition. He struck me as being a capable and quite a ruthless person. He would have had every opportunity to acquire the weapon. He may well have met Major Thoseby. It is not difficult to imagine some sort of motive. Supposing he had been an undercover Gestapo agent?"

"Well, it's possible," said Mr. Rumbold, "but it seems a little far-fetched. The war's been over nearly five years."

"I agree. There's a much worse snag than that, though. How did he get up to Major Thoseby's room and back again without being seen

This England . . .

Gold Hill, Shaftesbury

AIDED by the powerful ealdormen of Mercia, Wilts and Somerset, Alfred the Great inflicted on the Danes those shattering defeats which may well have saved all Western Europe. Then in his programme of consolidation rebuilt on a hilltop the stronghold town of Shaston, walled around. Within was founded the vast abbey whose structure formed part of the perimeter defence. For monks were no mere recluses but active in affairs. Their trained and vigorous minds added not only to scholarship but to men's daily pleasure from such crafts as husbandry and brewing . . . Indeed they were monks who first found in Burton waters their incomparable virtues. And helped to raise the great ale of England to such an excellence that our sturdy Saxon forbears would have rejoiced in the draught that is yours today, when you call for Bass or Worthington.

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TEN FOR 2/8

by Carnino and Colonel Alwright—supposing he did the job before half past ten? Or by Victoria herself if he did it afterwards?"

"Quite so. The sealed box, in fact. What about Carnino?"

"Could have had some motive connected with wartime happenings in France. Again not very likely. He's the type who might use a knife—and there's no doubt he could have got hold of this one. He worked in the kitchen."

"Also don't forget it was Carnino who delayed sending for the doctor. If he did the murder at all he must have done it before half past ten, so it would have been important to delay the medical inspection as long as possible to confuse the time of death."

"I'm glad you were attending to my searching cross-examination," said Macrea, with a grin. "Exactly the same objections, however, apply to Carnino. How did he get up there? He daren't have left the reception-desk—not with Colonel Alwright calling for a whisky every five minutes, and people liable to come in at the front door at any time. The risk was too great."

"All right," said Mr. Rumbold. "You said four. Who's the fourth?"

FOR a moment Macrea did not answer. "My fourth," he said, slowly, "is an unknown man operating from the street at the back. The only thing known of him is that he answers to the name of Benny."

"But—how did he do it? How did he get up there and down again? Miss Box didn't say she saw a man climbing up. She said she heard someone *calling* up. Who is this unknown person, anyway?"

"Dammit," said Macrea irritably, "this isn't a detective story. The murderer doesn't *have* to be one of the principal characters. It might have been any old enemy of Thoseby's, who happened to choose that moment to finish him off."

"How did he reach the room?"

"I don't know. There's a lot we don't know. We want more facts. Where's that son of yours?"

"I wouldn't mind knowing that myself," said Mr. Rumbold.

* * *

Inspector Parridge took the stand. Mr. Summers, prosecuting counsel, faced him.

"Your name is Randolph Parridge and you are a Detective-Inspector in the Criminal Investigation Department?"

"Yes."

"In March of this year, you were the Divisional Detective-Inspector in Q Division?"

"That is so."

"On the night of March 14 of this year, as the result of a message you received, did you go to the Family Hotel in Pearlyman Street?"

"Yes, I did."

"Will you tell the jury, in your own words, what happened?"

"I arrived at the Family Hotel at about ten minutes past eleven in the evening." Inspector Parridge was a large, sanguine man; he spoke with the point and fluency which distinguishes the habitual from the occasional giver of evidence. "I was met by Monsieur Sainte, whom I understood to be the proprietor of the hotel. He conducted me to a bedroom at the back of the premises, where I found the body of the deceased lying on the floor. It was evident that he was dead and the absence of any weapon raised a clear assumption of murder."

"One moment, please, Inspector. Was it plain to you at that point what sort of weapon had caused the wound?"

"It was clearly a knife wound."

"Have you, in your experience, ever known a knife used as a weapon by a person taking his own life?"

"No. A razor occasionally. Not a knife."

"Then that fact also would influence you in deciding that you were dealing with a case of murder?"

"Certainly. I acted from the first on the assumption that I was investigating a case of murder."

"Thank you. I wished that to be made quite plain to the jury in view of the steps you subsequently took. Please go on."

"I understood from the account given to me by Monsieur Sainte that all the persons who had seen the body had been asked, by him, to wait in the room next door."

"The room occupied by Mrs. Roper?"

"That is correct. I found there the hotel waiter, Carnino, Mrs. Roper, and the prisoner. I asked Monsieur Sainte to join them, which he did. Before questioning them I made a quick examination of the deceased's room. I found a knife."

The exhibit was handed to the inspector and identified.

"I understood that this was a kitchen knife from the hotel. I had it placed on one side for expert examination. I did not, at that time, find anything else of significance in the room. There was a half-unpacked suitcase and some papers on a bedside table, which seemed to be notes of some conference at the War Office."

"Did you then, or subsequently, get any impression of what Major Thoseby had been doing when he was interrupted by the entry of the person who killed him?"

"It seemed fairly apparent that he had been sitting at the bedside table, writing or reading. There was a chair pushed back from the table, and the table itself was drawn out away from the bed."

"I see. Carry on with your evidence, Inspector."

The witness continued. "After searching the room I questioned all four of the people who appeared to

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Sergeant Robert Holles

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be most possibly concerned. On the face of the evidence, I dismissed from my mind for the moment Colonel Alwright and the guests who were still out of the hotel at a quarter to eleven. Also the daily staff. Neither then, nor subsequently, did there appear to be any evidence of an intruder from outside. I took statements, therefore, immediately from Mr. Sainte, the waiter Carnino, Mrs. Roper and the prisoner."

"How long did all this take?"

"It was nearly one o'clock by the time I had finished. By that time I had also received the first medical report, indicating the approximate time of death and I had had a further opportunity of examining the wound and the knife."

"And as a result of all this?"

"As a result of this, at about one fifteen, I cautioned the prisoner and told her that I was taking her into custody on a charge of murder."

"Thank you," said Mr. Summers.

"He's got a nasty little habit of looking attentive"

MACREA stared at the witness. "Inspector Parridge," he said, "you have told us that at the time of this investigation you were the Divisional Detective-Inspector in charge of Q Division."

"That is so."

"You must excuse a layman's ignorance of police procedure, Inspector, but when you were called to this crime would it not have been the normal thing for you to bring a doctor *with* you?"

"I—yes—that would have been normal."

"But you didn't do so?"

"The message mentioned that the police doctor had already been summoned."

"And you relied on this statement?"

"Yes."

"A statement which unfortunately turned out later to be untrue."

"Yes. As soon as I realized that, I had him sent for."

"Yes," said Macrea. "Most unfortunate. Most unfortunate. Now, Inspector Parridge—you have told us you were Divisional Detective-Inspector of this division. If, at any time, you felt in need of assistance you could apply for it from the Central Office at Scotland Yard—when a chief inspector would have taken over the case, working with you, of course."

"Yes. It was open to me to do that if I wished."

"But you never did so. You did not feel in any need of assistance outside the resources of your division."

"No."

"Despite the fact that half the evidence in this crime was to be looked for outside this country—in France."

"I don't think that is quite correct. Only the motive was to be found in something that was alleged to have happened in France. I should not call that half the evidence."

"Even when you were investigating the murder of a man who had done most of his war service in France, by a French girl, whom he was alleged to have met in France, in an hotel kept by a Frenchman with an Italian waiter who had spent much of his life in France."

"No."

"A typical English crime?"

"It was an English crime. A crime committed in London."

"You persist in that?"

"You will not intimidate me, Mr. Macrea."

"Nothing," said Macrea, with a crocodile smile, "was farther from my mind. Now, Inspector, would it be true to say that you have always held very strong views on this case?"

"No, I don't think it would."

"You have been engaged in a number of murder cases?"

"Yes. Quite a few."

"Can you recall any other case in which you have charged the alleged murderer within ninety minutes of your arrival on the scene of the crime."

"No, I don't think I can."

"And that in spite of the fact that there was no case here of a confession or of any very obvious guilt. There were a number of conflicting stories, and from them you arrived at so definite a conclusion that you immediately charged the accused."

"If I was reasonably certain of her guilt, it was my duty to charge her at once."

"Why?"

"For many reasons. Among others, so that she should not have time to destroy evidence."

"I see. Yes." This answer seemed to cause Macrea some satisfaction. "If I may revert to my former question. What was there in the evidence—I don't mean such evidence as may have come to light now, but the evidence which you gathered in the first two hours—to make you certain of the accused's guilt. Or was it just an inspired guess?"

"CERTAINLY not. I had the evidence of the weapon. I had the evidence that the prisoner had been found standing over the body, which had just that moment been heard falling to the floor."

"You had Mrs. Roper's evidence on that."

"Yes."

"Which, at that time, you had no reason to disbelieve."

"I'm not saying I disbelieve it now."

"Very well. You had the weapon and the evidence of Mrs. Roper. Was there anything else?"

"Certainly. There was the means and opportunity. There was also the motive."

"I see. You had already considered the question of motive?"

"Yes."

Mr. Macrea fixed his monocle into his eye, leaned forward slightly, and said: "*At that time*, Inspector, what evidence had you about motive?"

The witness took a minute to think this one out. Then he said: "I had the evidence of Mr. Sainte. He told me that the prisoner had been trying to get hold of Major Thoseby for some time, and that he had come to the hotel to see her."

"And, in your opinion, a desire to see someone is a motive for murdering them?"

"No. But I gathered that the prisoner had given birth to an illegitimate child and that the father was alleged to be Major Thoseby."

"Mr. Sainte told you this?"

"Yes."

"Very considerate of him. No doubt you immediately asked the prisoner for information."

"I put it to her, yes."

"What did she say?"

"She denied it."

"I see. Then you had two versions of it. A first-hand denial by the party concerned and a rather grubby third-hand allegation by Mr. Sainte, who never even knew the prisoner in France. What made you prefer his story to hers?"

"He had no motive for misrepresenting the truth. She had."

"I see. I take it you agree that as an officer of police it was your duty to discover the truth. Not to take sides."

"Certainly."

"And not to act as a special prosecutor."

"I have never done so."

"Very well. May I refer you to something that was said by Sergeant Cleeve." [Counsel read the latter part of Sergeant Cleeve's evidence.] "Have you any comment on that?"

"No."

"You were aware that no fingerprint had been discovered on the bell push?"

"Yes."

"Did not the absence of any print from the bell push strike you as significant?"

"If anything, I thought that it told against the prisoner. It disproved her story that Major Thoseby had rung the bell for her."

"In that case, Inspector, would you not have expected to have found *some* fingerprint on the bell? Anyone pressing a bell is bound to leave a fingerprint—prints last, I understand, for several weeks."

"Possibly the bell push had been dusted."

"Possibly. I can't help thinking that it was a very remarkable hotel if it was so. Now, Inspector, if a fact told plainly in favour of the prisoner it would be your duty to produce it?"

"If it told plainly in her favour."

"Even though it weakened the case being put forward by the police?"

"Yes."

"I am glad to have your assurance on the point. Now might I refer once again to the extract which I have put to you from Sergeant Cleeve's evidence. Am I wrong, Inspector, in detecting a certain change of theory in the police case?"

"I'm afraid I have no idea what you mean."

"I will try to explain, then. At the outset of Sergeant Cleeve's examination by my learned friend, the theory which he expounded—I do not suggest that it was his own idea; I take it that it represented the gospel according to Scotland Yard—was that the presence of Miss Lamartine's fingerprints on the handle of the knife showed that she used the knife to commit this crime. Not to chop onions, Inspector. To murder Major Thoseby."

"Yes."

"However, when under cross-examination by myself, it seemed that the position of the fingerprints might rule them out for this purpose, Sergeant Cleeve then reverted—or perhaps I should say moved on—to a second suggestion. That, if the murderer had been wearing gloves, it would account both for the absence of what I might call 'lethal' fingerprints—and the blurring over of the existing 'kitchen' fingerprints."

"That is so."

"Well, you can't have it both ways. Which is *your* theory, Inspector?"

"Taking everything into account, I think it is very possible that the murderer wore gloves."

MACREA glanced at his notes. "I see. Well, I am glad to get that settled. Now, Inspector, in examination you indicated—correct me if I am wrong—that Monsieur Sainte, as soon as he had seen the body, had all the people concerned collected in one room."

"In Mrs. Roper's room."

"And you interviewed them in there."

"No. I saw them one at a time in the empty bedroom—the one on the other side of the passage."

"And it was there, after interrogating her, that you cautioned the prisoner and took her with you to the police station."

"Yes."

"It would be part of your duty, I take it, to have the room where Major Thoseby's body was found thoroughly searched?"

"Certainly."

"And Mrs. Roper's room."

"Yes."

"And no doubt the prisoner herself was searched when she arrived at the police station."

"Yes."

"And the results of that search were reported to you."

"Yes."

"Then no doubt you will be able to set our minds at rest at once. Did you find the gloves?"

"I—I beg your pardon."

"I asked if you found the gloves."

"No. As a matter of fact I didn't."

"There were no gloves?"

"No."

"None at all?"

"No."

"Neither on the prisoner, nor in any of the places she had been in after the murder?"

"Well—no."

"Never mind, Inspector. You can always revert to your first idea again. Or possibly you might like to put forward a third and entirely new theory. Possibly the murder was committed by a disembodied spirit with no hands at all!"

To be continued next week

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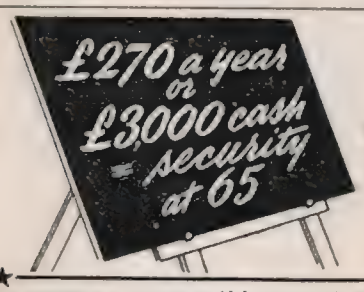

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NIGHT IN TRIESTE

Continued from page 14

wearing a natty brown suit and homburg.

They looked down at the man in the road for a moment. Then, the one in shirt sleeves—he was fatter and looked more mature than the other—stirred the writhing shape with his foot.

"He's alive all right," I said in Italian. "I think he's probably not so badly injured as he looks."

They both turned to stare at me as if they'd seen me for the first time. The man with the hat grunted, and then slowly, almost casually, he took a revolver out of his pocket, aimed it carefully at the figure on the ground and fired three shots into his body.

The hairs on the back of my scalp had risen. I was quite unable to move. And then, in the same slow way, the man with a hat put a bullet into my front offside tyre.

They walked back towards their own car, the man with the gun walking sideways, like a crab. He kept his eye and his gun on me till he was five yards from the Lancia. As the car began to move forward, he turned and jumped on board. They had not said a word. I watched the car disappear round the bend with its door still flapping against the mudguard. The rear plate was quite clean and I could read the number. I jotted it down quickly.

After a moment or two, I knelt down beside the figure on the ground and pushed a hand under his coat. There was no flicker from his heart. I could feel the blood where a bullet had smashed through his ribs.

I began to take stock of my position. Plainly, my duty as a law-abiding citizen was to go at once to the police with the whole story. It needed very little reflection to show me that it was an extremely unlikely one. Even if I did succeed in convincing the police that I had nothing to do with this man's killing I would be involved in very lengthy proceedings and subsequently called upon to give evidence at someone's trial. That was not exactly how I had planned to spend my time during this continental trip. I was supposed to be putting the car, an experimental model, through a stiff, one-month test for a magazine.

I thought I could see a way to save face and conscience as well.

It took me a few minutes to change the wheel. Then I got aboard and drove like mad into Trieste. I stopped at the first café and phoned the police. My story was that I had seen a car knock down a man and drive on without stopping. I gave them the number of the Lancia and sufficient details for them to find the body.

A careful voice repeated it after me. "Your name and address, please?"

I'd said all I meant to say. I put the receiver down and walked out of the box.

When I arrived at the Riviera Hotel to take up my booking, I still felt sick in the stomach. I gave the clerk my car keys so that he could have my bags taken up to my room. Then I went into the bar and had a few quick ones before dinner.

I had a bottle of wine with my food and a brace of liqueurs after it. By the time I was ready to go upstairs and unpack my bag, I was feeling pretty jolly, and prepared to believe the business on the road was all a dream.

I stopped at the hall-porter's desk before going up, to collect my key.

"What number, sir?"

"Twelve."

He ran his finger along the row of hooks until it stopped at an empty space. "Ah, yes. I remember now, sir. The page took your bags up. I expect the key is still in the door."

He was right. It was. I walked in and stopped dead. My three cases were parked in a neat row in the middle of the large room. Standing beside them was a young woman. She was not just an ordinary young woman; she was the epitome of Italian beauty. Her jet-black hair was parted in the middle. Large dark eyes and a full lower lip were set in an oval face. The deep tan of her neck and shoulders was emphasized by a white dress of simple design which nevertheless flattered every line of her figure.

All this raving glamour on top of the liquor was too much. I just stood and goggled at her.

One slim eyebrow went up. "Yes, signor?" Her voice was pitched low but the words made me feel I'd violated the inner temple of Shangri-La.

I said faintly: "Good evening."

"Are these suitcases yours?"

"Yes."

"Then will you please have them moved from here at once? I am afraid you have made a mistake about your room."

For a moment, I was stumped for words. Then I took a quick look over my shoulder at the number painted on the door. It was number twelve all right. I said: "I'm very sorry, but I think it may be you who are making the mistake. However, if it means so much to you to have this room, I will go and ask the manager to allot me another."

As I turned to go she bit her lip and I heard her bracelets jangle. "One moment, I will come with you. Possibly you are right."

I stood aside and she went by me with long-limbed grace. I followed downstairs in her faintly perfumed slip-stream.

The manager was in his office, wrestling with the day's accounts. I said: "I wonder if you'd clear up a slight misunderstanding. It seems the same room has been allotted to the signorina and me."

He winced and gave me a hurt look. Without a word, he went out of his office. He stood behind the reception desk and ran his finger down the room chart.

"I'm pretty sure number twelve was the room I was given," I said.

"Yes, sir. The signorina's is

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Forget it

ROBERT BROWNING said: "Good to forgive: best to forget." And someone else wrote: "A retentive memory is a good thing, but the ability to forget is the true token of greatness."

Memory is a precious gift. It should not be misused to perpetuate slights and injuries, disappointments, mistakes and past bitternesses.

Memory should be used to enshrine the good. Forgetfulness should be deliberately used to blot out the ill.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

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number twenty-three. It is on the second floor."

"Twenty-three?" She was a little embarrassed. "But I am sure your receptionist said twelve."

"No, signorina. Twenty-three."

She wavered for a moment, and then smiled apologetically. "Signor, how can you forgive me?"

"Don't think of it. These things do happen."

We turned to go up the stairs together.

"You are not Italian, signor? English, perhaps."

"Yes, just about. How did you guess?"

"Oh, you have a little accent. It is the first time you are in Trieste?"

"Yes."

"Then a treat is in store for you. You must be sure to go to the open-air opera in the Castello. It is very beautiful."

"You know Trieste well, then?"

"Very well. I was brought up here. But now there is no one that I know. No one at all. . . ."

We were passing my landing now. I decided it might be worth while to go on up to the second floor.

It was. When I got round to suggesting we might see the town together, she agreed. Half an hour later we were in a cab heading for a night club called the Piccolo Mondo. Something told me to keep my own car out of the picture.

THE Piccolo Mondo was quite a place. A marble dance floor had been laid out on the bare hillside, with tables dispersed under the trees round about. The band played tangos, rumbas and sambas from a curtained stage. Through the trees you could see the lights along the harbour. Dancing slowly round with Maddalena—we'd got to that stage—on my arm, I found it hard to believe the events of three hours before.

It was during the third tango that she spoke in my ear. "Rob. Do you see that man at the table by himself?"

"Near the band, you mean?" I'd spotted him myself, a lone wolf who seemed to be giving Maddalena a shade too much attention.

"Yes," Maddalena said. "He seems to be watching you all the time."

"I think it's more likely to be you he's watching."

She shivered. "I don't think I like him very much. There's something about his eyes. . . ."

Somewhere in my mind a little nagging doubt was born. Perhaps, after sober reflection, the two gentlemen in the Lancia had regretted their action in confiding their corpse to my care. Perhaps they had been coursing the hotels for a car like mine. It wouldn't be difficult to find.

I said to Maddalena: "You know this place pretty well. Is there any way we can slip out the back without being seen?"

She turned to me quickly. "Rob, are you afraid of anyone?"

"No. That's to say—well——"

She put a hand on my arm. "Don't tell me if you'd rather not." She leant close to me and lowered her voice. "Listen. I am going to the toilet room. In two minutes you follow me. Go through the same door. There's a staircase going out the back from there."

I stood up as she rose and watched her go through the door to the toilet. I looked for my friend near the band. He had been joined by a pal. They were talking together and looking towards me without any pretence at concealment.

I got up, crossed the floor and went through the door where Maddalena had disappeared. She was waiting for me just inside. She took me by the hand and we raced down a long flight of stone steps. At the bottom was a door. We unbolted it and slipped out into a dark back street. Almost immediately across the street a taxi was depositing a drunken fare. We sprinted over and jumped in.

"Riviera Hotel!" Maddalena called to the driver. "Drive away quickly."

As we turned out of the street, I looked back towards the rear entrance of the Piccolo Mondo. A beam of light shone out across the street. A man's figure was silhouetted in it. That was all I saw before the corner hid him.

Maddalena said: "I think we'd better go home now."

"Yes. I'm sorry I've dragged you into this."

She was looking intently ahead but she turned a quick smile on me. "Never mind. I've been in trouble myself before now."

It was well past midnight and there were few people on the streets except an occasional soldier with his girl. All the lights in the Riviera were still on when we pulled up behind a big Chevrolet with U.S. plates outside the hotel.

Maddalena went up the steps and into the foyer while I groped about with a bundle of Italian notes and paid the driver. He drove off and I turned to follow Maddalena.

My foot was on the bottom step when she came quickly out. I could see by her face that something was amiss.

"Quick!" she said urgently. "They're waiting for you inside. We must go somewhere else."

"But how on earth——"

"Don't stop to argue. I think they may have seen me."

I glanced up and down the street. The lights of cars were coming towards us from both directions. I had a sudden and very unpleasant sensation that some vast and efficient organization was closing in on me, that I was in a net which was being drawn tighter and tighter round me.

"Come on. Into this car." I took

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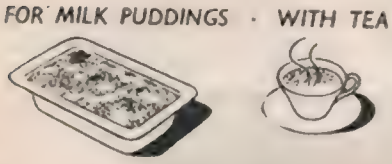

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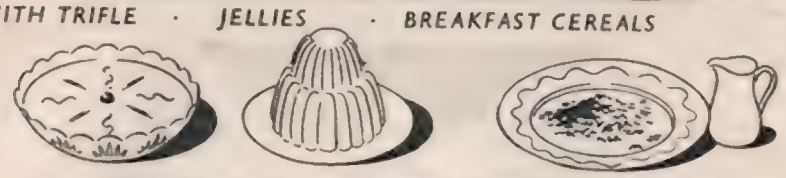

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"No, I haven't told him about it yet —because I know he'll hit the ceiling"

Maddalena's wrist and ran to the Chevrolet.

It was a mad way to act and I admit that for a moment I panicked. The doors were unlocked and the ignition key was there. We were moving in about two seconds. I swung hard across the road.

The lights from either side were closing in fast. Fifty yards away down the street, a car was parked. It moved out into the middle of the road. I drove at it hard, swerved at the last moment, and took to the kerb. We went by with about an inch to spare. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw that the other car was full of men.

We were about fifty yards past before the shots came—a round half-dozen of them; I never discovered whether any of them hit the car, but none of them worried us. I was concentrating on pushing the Chevrolet at top speed through a maze of streets in answer to Maddalena's expert directions.

After five minutes she looked back. "It's all right. There's no one following us. Stop at this next café."

I did as she said, and before I could ask any questions she was out of the car and walking into the brightly lit bar. She was back in three minutes.

"I was just telephoning a friend of mine. He says he'll help us. We'll leave the car here and walk."

I was reluctant to leave the Chevrolet, but Maddalena seemed to know what she was doing. I had to admit that I would have been lost without her.

"I don't know why you're doing all this for me. I might be some dangerous criminal with the police after me, for all you know. Who is this friend?"

She turned to face me and looked very earnestly into my eyes. "Whatever happens, Rob, you must trust me and do as I say. Will you promise me that?"

"Well, yes, of course; but I don't quite understand."

"You will later. This is someone who'll take you to a place where you'll be safe."

We crossed the road and made off quickly towards the blue glow in the sky which told where the harbour lay. I was beginning to wonder just what my new girl friend really was in private life. There was a lot more to her than met the eye. She had taken complete charge of the situation as if all this was part of the day's work to her.

She led me through a tangle of narrow streets till at last we emerged on the broad roadway running along the waterfront. We struck straight across it and walked out on to a kind of pier. Almost at the end we stopped beside a long, lean motor launch. A light was burning in the cabin.

Maddalena called: "Luigi!" and jumped down on to the deck. I followed her. A dark figure appeared at the bottom of the small companionway. "We must get going at once," Maddalena said. "They may not be far behind us."

I said: "What's the idea? Where are we going now?"

"Venice," said Maddalena, and behind her the launch's engines throbbed into life.

I MISSED what must have been a very beautiful sight—our approach to Venice from the sea. I was flat out, fast asleep on the couch in the cabin. The first intimation that we had arrived was a rough hand shaking me by the shoulder.

I sat up and looked into the face of a curly-headed youth with an agonizing squint. This must be the shadowy Luigi.

"Wake up. You've arrived."

I shook my head and gathered my wits. I could feel the launch bumping gently against a landing stage and the slapping of the water against her sides. The engine had died.

"Where's Maddalena?"

"She's gone on ahead. You're to come with me."

I rolled off the couch and followed him up the companionway. I could see that we were in a narrow canal. The walls of the houses went up darkly towards a narrow strip of sky above. The water looked black and sleek, like oil. Its faint slopping echoed weirdly in the confined space. Otherwise there was no sound all around. High above us the light from an uncurtained window cast a square on the blank wall opposite.

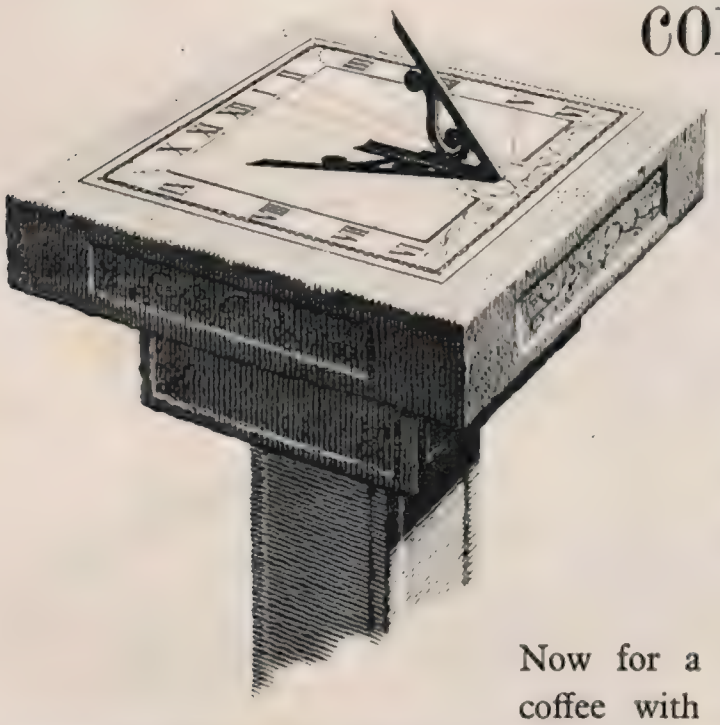
"In there," Luigi said.

There was only one possible doorway. I walked across the landing stage and went in. I found myself in a pitch black hall. Behind me, the door clanged, and a torch beam cut through the blackness.

"Up the stairs," said Luigi. He played the torch on the steps ahead of me. We went up six flights of stone stairs. On the third floor, he stopped and opened a door. We went into an uncarpeted passage. A light came from the first door on the right. I walked in and for the second time that evening stopped dead.

Standing facing me was a tall, thin man with a completely bald head. There were two other men in the

fragrant flavoursome coffee...



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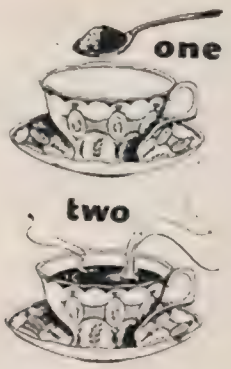

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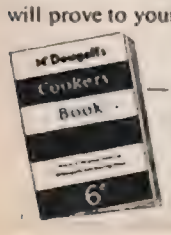

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room. It was with a curious sense of inevitability that I recognized my friends of the Lancia.

The door had closed behind me and I sensed that Luigi was standing against it. Behind me, in a corner which had been concealed by the open door, someone struck a match. I looked around. Maddelena was sitting in an armchair with her legs crossed. She was lighting a cigarette. She didn't look up at me.

Curiously enough, I didn't feel frightened so much as sad. I suppose my vanity was hurt. I thought I'd been doing rather well with Maddalena.

"I'm sorry this has to happen," the bald man was saying to me. "We've nothing against you personally, but you know a little bit too much for my peace of mind. I'm afraid I'm not so trusting as Guido and Enzo here. I think that the best thing is to get it over with as soon as possible, don't you?"

I didn't. Being shot is not quite like having a tooth out. I wanted to live a little longer.

"I thought the condemned man was allowed one last cigarette and time to say his prayers."

The bald man shrugged. "I don't see why not, though if it was me I should want to get through with it as quickly as possible. You can have one minute. Give him a cigarette, Guido."

Guido stepped forward, handed me a cigarette and lighted it. It was a low-grade Italian stinker but I drew the smoke deep into my lungs. I was beginning to get the better of the deadly inertia that had fallen on my mind and resolution since I had come into this room.

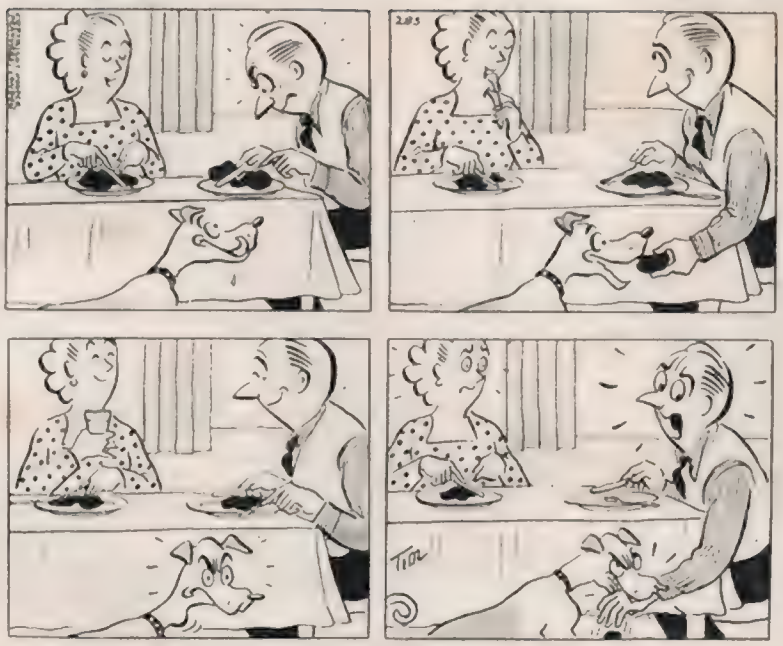
"You know, I've always wanted to see Venice. It's funny that it has to happen this way. I suppose you chose Venice because it's such a good place to get rid of the body."

Nobody spoke. There were two of them at the door so I knew there was nothing doing in that direction. I could see that they were all very much on their toes.

I knew my time was nearly up. I said: "I've one more request to make. But it's between Maddalena and me."

For the first time, her eyes

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*



flickered up at me. There was a queer mixture of defiance and compassion in her look.

"You've led me up the garden path all along, Maddalena. Will you give me one kiss as consolation?"

Maddalena jumped to her feet. "Consolation? Here is consolation," she said in a brittle voice and came towards me. She lifted her hand and gave me a crisp slap on the right cheek. Her face was very near to mine. I saw her lips move. "*The window behind you. Jump for it.*"

The words were whispered so low that I wondered if I had imagined them. What made it all seem even more crazy was that she had spoken in English. While I was still goggling, her other hand came up and hit me a resounding smack on the other cheek. Behind her I heard the bald man laugh.

For an instant, as she turned away, she screened me from some of the others. In that second I turned, and, with my forearms held in front of my face, took a header through the window behind me. The glass shattered. A couple of muffled shots went off somewhere behind me and then I was falling and falling. . . .

I don't know which way up I hit the water but it knocked all the breath out of me. I went right to the bottom. I pushed off with my feet, but before I reached the surface the blackout came.

THE captain of *carabinieri* said: "Well, I think that is all we need from you at the moment, signor. When you are ready to go, a police car will take you back to Trieste."

He stood up and held out his hand to me. "We are very grateful to you for your part in the capture of these men. They've been troubling our excise and customs department for a long time."

I was sitting in Venice police headquarters. It was ten o'clock the following morning. My head and hands were smothered in bandages. It seemed that the Italian police had been on the launch's tail ever since it entered the Venetian lagoon. They were just about to close in on the house when I made my appearance through the third floor window, nearly swamping one of their boats.

"By the way," I said. "Did they find the body on the Monfalcone road which I telephoned about?"

"The Venezia Giulia Police went out immediately after your call. They found the man and, of course, he was dead. He was one of the organization who decided things were getting a bit too hot and thought he would try and ingratiate himself with the police by turning stool pigeon. Unfortunately for him one of them found out and that was the end of him."

I got up out of my chair. I was still very unsteady on my feet and the captain took my arm solicitously. "I'm afraid you have had a rough time here."

"It's nothing," I said bitterly. "Nothing at all. I don't mind helping the forces of law and order. I'd just like to get my hands on that girl, Maddalena. She might have let me know what was going on."

"Maddalena." The captain was embarrassed. "She has asked me to explain that, signor. I must take full responsibility. It was on my insistence that you were kept in the dark. It was, of course, my men who were shadowing you in Trieste."

He caught my look, and said apologetically: "Forgive me, signor. I realized that, while you might be valiant as a lion, you might not be a great actor. It was best that you should not know what was going on."

I turned to the door, and he followed me. "You must not blame Maddalena, signor. She is much concerned for you."

We were outside now, and he stopped suddenly and waved. A police launch was waiting outside. In it was Maddalena. I knew she had seen us coming, but she had turned away and was looking at the traffic on the canal. The sun was high and the waters were sparkling. Gondolas went gliding past, their prows dipping gracefully to the small waves from the motor launches. All of a sudden it seemed very worth while being alive.

I took my place beside Maddalena. We did not speak till the launch had swirled out into the broad waters of the Grand Canal. Then she turned and gave me her fascinating smile.

She said: "About that garden path you mentioned——" THE END

UNCLE HO VERSUS THE PLAYBOY KING

Continued from page 16

though the hurricane of the war years passed Indo-China by, the earthquake that followed did not. In the first week of March, 1945, Bao-Dai was out on a tiger-hunt in the forests beyond Dalat when he found himself surrounded by Japanese police.

On March 10—having decided they were going to lose the war—the Japs, with the "vengeance of the vanquished," jailed the French and proclaimed an independent Empire of Viet-Nam, with Bao-Dai as its Emperor.

Ho-Chi-Minh, who had been waiting for thirty years for just this moment, now suddenly materialized with an organization he had forged in exile in Siam, in China and Hongkong. The "empire" flopped ignominiously. "Uncle Ho" took over.

Bao-Dai abdicated. He said: "We declare ourselves ready to make all sacrifices in the hope that such sacrifices will benefit the nation. We cannot help feeling a certain regret in looking back on our twenty-year-old reign that our position has made it well nigh impossible for us to render any appreciable service to our country."

Said "Uncle Ho": "I was chosen President because I had nothing—no family, no house, no fortune and only one suit of clothes, the one I am wearing."

In March, Bao-Dai, who had been appointed "Supreme Adviser to the Republic," left for Hongkong. He did not come back. The next stop was the French Riviera, his natural habitat. Here he bought a château.

Once again Ho-Chi-Minh was in France, too—the honoured, fêted guest at the Conference of Fontainebleau, President of the new state of Viet-Nam. The wheel had turned full circle. The refugee was the chief of a nation; the Emperor, a refugee—of sorts.

But by December of that year the wheel had turned yet again and the French were searching desperately for a national leader who would rally the Viet-Namese against the notorious Red Rebel, Ho-Chi-Minh. They inevitably came back to Bao-Dai, their synthesis. It is to the credit of Bao-Dai that he stuck out long and stubbornly for the best possible terms for his country. Perhaps, too, he was not over anxious to leave his beloved Riviera again.

At the end of April, 1949, having gained and got on to paper far more than was ever offered to Ho-Chi-Minh—although still falling short of the sort of independence Britain had offered India—Bao-Dai returned to Viet-Nam. On July 1 he formed his first administration, with himself as chief of state.

How goes the great "Bao-Dai Experiment" now, two years after? *Vive Bao-Dai! A bas le Communisme!* Go where you will in Viet-Nam today and the slogans, the six-letter name, the photographs pursue you—on streamers fluttering over village streets, in schools, in prison camps, written up in white paint on the sides of bridges or military posts. "UNE PATRIE: VIET-NAM; UNE FOI: LE NATIONALISME; UN CHEF: BAO-DAI."

On paper the enthusiasm is tremendous; the reality is very different. By general consent, the prestige of Bao-Dai, not particularly high when he came out to Viet-Nam in 1949, has been steadily seeping away. In Tonkin the emperors of Annam have never meant much, and Bao-Dai has not changed that view. Down to the south, in the Mekong Delta, Bao-Dai is no more than a name to most of the peasants.

The reasons for this are obvious enough. A national leader, even a popular king, must be constantly heard and seen. Bao-Dai is neither. He spends his days at the pleasantly cool hill station of Dalat, 100 miles north-east of Saigon. When I tried to interview him—although he is amenable enough to the Press—I found he was cruising in his yacht off Nahtrang, Viet-Nam's best seaside resort.

When not cruising at Nahtrang he is hunting tigers at Dalat. Occasionally he descends on Saigon or Hanoi, reviews the troops, and disappears back to Dalat. He makes four or five speeches a year, generally declaring his satisfaction with progress being made.

What is the answer to the riddle of Bao-Dai? Is he afraid of the gunmen of the Viet-Minh, who are said to have sentenced him to execution? Does he refuse to stay in Saigon so long as the French High Commissioner persists in occupying the old Imperial Palace, while he, the Emperor, takes lesser quarters? Is he, as they tell you in Tonkin, just another French puppet, dedicated to drawing his ample salary? Or is he—as some who know him well say—playing some deep game, a waiting game, biding his time?

Certainly the young man is no fool. And if he is a puppet, the puppeteers

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who pull the strings often find them badly crossed. For the French complain with bitterness that, while Bao-Dai fails to do his stuff in rallying the people, he nevertheless takes his position seriously and is constantly interfering with their plans. Some time ago, when the country was without a government for several months, it was generally put down to Bao-Dai's refusal to re-appoint as Prime Minister the French nominee, Tran Van Huu.

How, meantime, is Ho-Chi-Minh faring, hunted and bombed in his ever-moving headquarters? His prestige is still high: there is still a certain magic in his name. Most Viet-Namese still see his fight as a fight, not for Communism, but for independence. "Our programme," he announced in the early days, "is neither Communist nor Socialist; it is simply a programme for the advancement of the peoples."

And the Viet-Minh radio has been able to point to a strong, practical programme of national regeneration which exposes the fatuity of the obsequious Excellencies of Saigon—the cutting of rents, the distribution of absentee landlord's land, the drive against illiteracy, the drive for hygienic living, for new local manufactures. . . .

Signs Of A Purge

Yet all does not go well with Ho-Chi-Minh. For the tragedy played out in so many other Communist countries is being enacted here, also. It is now generally agreed that "Uncle Ho," long suspected of over-independence and nationalist divergence, has now been edged out of control in favour of rigid Moscow-line men like Giap, the able young organizer of the Viet-Minh army, an ex-history teacher whose wife died in a French jail, or Hoan Quoc Viet, chief of the Viet-Minh trade unions, or Truong Chinh, secretary general of the Workers' Party.

Intelligence reports—and information is not difficult to get—have revealed in recent months that the hard core of Communists have been steadily tightening their grip throughout the Viet-Minh organization. Now not only Viet-Minh officers, but also chiefs of sections, signals n.c.o.s, and those in charge of weapons, are all found to be carrying Party cards.

Meanwhile, under the dynamic leadership of de Lattre, the French and Viet-Nam armies have been inflicting heavy losses on the Viet-Minh battalions, breaking up their organization in the villages and towns and pushing them out of the rice lands into the mountains and swamps.

Menace From North

But Ho-Chi-Minh still holds a trump card: the Chinese millions just across the frontier, less than 100 miles from Hanoi; the Chinese who, as every Viet-Namese is only too well aware, could flow over Indo-China like the Red River in flood.

This is, however, a dangerous card and—though the Viet-Minh radio has been working round to something more—so far Ho-Chi-Minh has confined himself to Chinese counsellors in his army. For, though their nation has borrowed its culture from China, the Viet-Namese do not love their "great uncles," the Chinese, whose description for them means "the tail of the rat."

Said a young Viet-Nam lieutenant: "The Chinese are colonialists just as much as the French. We have had 1,000 years of Chinese domination."

Said another young officer: "If the Viet-Minh bring in the Chinese, the whole political situation will

change at once. We had the Chinese here in 1946. They were very hungry for power."

Meanwhile, many thousands of refugees, sick to death of war and the ways of armies, are pouring—"rallying" as the French put it—into the "pacified" zones. Most of the cities of Viet-Nam are now twice or three times their prewar size as peasants filter into them from the ravaged countryside, seeking only a little security and peace. In recent months, intellectuals, too, sickened by ever more insistent demands for rigid conformity to the Party line, have been coming over in increasing numbers.

"We Must Work Hard"

It may be, indeed, that a new stage is approaching in the development of the Indo-China imbroglio. It might be signalled, for instance, by the meeting—to take place "when the military situation permits"—of a National Assembly of Viet-Nam. It will consist, probably, of one-third of representatives nominated by the parties, one-third from the professions and industries, and the remaining third elected, indirectly, in three stages.

But it will mark an enormous advance on anything existing at present. In his dentist's surgery I talked to Dr. Hoang-Co-Binh, president of the Assembly Study Committee of the North. He said: "The British House of Commons sits up till 3 a.m. So must we. We must work hard. . . . We must have *une grande valeur*—we must have more courage than Ho-Chi-Minh!"

Few nationalists, however, share even so much faith in the genuineness of the offer of a National Assembly. This is hardly remarkable, since for many months they have been living shut up in a box where no view that diverged from the Government line could be expressed, where your mail was systematically opened, and communication with the outside world was difficult and even perilous.

No gathering of twenty or more can be held in Saigon unless leave is first sought, and, if a speech is to be made at a birthday party or college reunion, that, too, has to be submitted to censorship. The newspapers are largely carbon copies, all full chiefly of official *discours*. Even music is censored.

People—even former Ministers—are actually afraid to talk to foreigners. For there is a certain Excellency Nguyen Van Tam, the very efficient Minister of Public Security. Before the war, M. Tam, a poet in Chinese, had won the proud

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GOLDEN SLUMBERS

It's part of keeping your baby happy to make sure his nappies cannot chafe his tender skin. Lux-washed nappies, gowns and shawls too, are soft and cherishing, sweet and white as when they were new. He'll sleep sweeter in Lux-washed things; make sure he has that comfort always.

If it's safe in water, it's safe in LUX

LX 3016-454 A *LEVER* PRODUCT

WOMEN KEEP WINNING!

"NEVER will I forget the thrill of receiving JOHN BULL'S telegram!" declared Mrs. H. Davie, 17 Hampstead Way, London, N.W. She is the *eleventh* woman reader to win a *Bullets* First in 1951—in Contest 1,792—her £500, plus a "Magic Carpet" holiday next year, was the thrilling reward for this simple but telling *Bullet* from the heart: LAND OF HOPE—WEE BIT *We* BOUGHT!

With this week's £500 for the best *Bullet* goes the last of JOHN BULL'S seasonable "Warmth and Comfort" Awards. Will its winner be a woman, attracted by this homely and practical prize—or a man, thinking of all that £500 could do? Supply the answer yourself!

MILLIONAIRE LUXURY FOR YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

£500 1st PRIZE CASH PLUS "WARMTH and COMFORT" AWARD value £100

Consisting of Fireside Chairs, Hearthrug, Portable Fire (elec., gas or oil), Interior-spring Mattress, pair of Blankets, Vacuum Jug, Portable Radio and novel Surprise Item. (Details can be varied to suit your needs, or extra cheque offered in lieu of 10-in-1 Award.)

£50, £25, 2 of £10, 5 of £5, 10 of £2.10s., 50 of 10s.

2,000 "Good Shot" Awards

"Sunday Feast" Bonuses

Whole Roast Chicken and 2 lb. delicious Ham (both tinned) accompany each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated Oct. 13, and in JOHN BULL, dated Oct. 20, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

GIANT "BULLETS" BIRTHDAY OFFER NEXT WEEK!

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Britannia's Babies
They Used To Say
Army Of Scientists
Family Life
Given Everything
To Save Paper
For Good Or Evil
The Agitator
Man With A System
Crushing
He's A Nobody, But
Ready For The Winter
Shook Her
Lovelier Than Ever
Soapsuds
Taking It Easy
Football Fan
Rude And Raucous
Little Fish
The Plane Took Off And

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

Hundreds Of .....
Borrowed Dad's.....
Sailed Into .....
"What, No.....?"
Whether She.....Or
On The.....At Midnight

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,801 (or Xword 753) "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

"I have read *'Bullets' Bulletin* for years," said £500 winner Mrs. H. Davie. "I just cannot understand any competitor who doesn't accept its helping hand." That "hand" can help to guide you also to a big prize. Reserve your supply on that *Bulletin* coupon below and be in time for the coming huge offers of *Bullets* Christmas Dinners!

Continued from next column

IF YOU CAN PARK—LITTER, WHY LITTER PARK?

For ten winners of £2 10s. see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

50 Prizes of 10s. and 2,000 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

"Bullets" Winners 1,796

FIRST PRIZE, £350: E. E. Davies, 20 Manor Way, Croxley Green, Herts:

ON THE PRECIPICE EDGE "BUTTERFLY" PEACE ELUDING MAN

£50: Mrs. A. Keys, 162 Drove Road, Biggleswade: IF YOU CAN ENJOY — WORKING, YOU'VE LIFETIME'S PLEASURE!

£25: R. Chadwell, 4A Alliance Road, Plumstead, S.E.18: ONE OF THE BUSIER KIND—SHOPKEEPER—TIME FOR *Customer*.

OTHER AWARDS: £10: R. Murray, 106 Park Road, Gt. Harwood, Blackburn: ON THE PRECIPICE EDGE —MANY ENVYING US *Cliffs*. £10: J. B. Taylor, "Highgate," New Road, Armitage, Rugeley: MRS. MOP'S KIND-HEARTEDNESS — WOULD "CLEAN UP" *World*! £5: Mrs. R Ashdown, 3 Chainhurst, Marden, Kent: BRIGHTER FUTURE—I'VE "GIVEN UP FORECASTING." £5: Miss L. Ballinger, 71 Ravenscourt Road, Hammersmith, W.6: ON THE PRECIPICE EDGE — "DANGER"—IN FIFTY LANGUAGES! £5: W. K. Blaylock, 378 Hipswell Highway, Stoke, Coventry: LIKE A NAGGING TOOTH—TO PERSIA, EACH DERRICK? £5: F. Overton, 21 Newbury Avenue, Gt. Coates, Grimsby: LIKE A NAGGING TOOTH—NOW—ONCE, "HEART THROB"! £5: E. P. Taunton, 12 St. Ann's Road, Malvern:

Continued in previous column

CASH AND FOOD PRIZES FOR XWORDS!

This Way To Win

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

£100 CASH 1st PRIZE

AWARDS VALUE £25 amongst 1st Runners-up and up to 50 JOHNNY-BASKETS each value £2

Strong but elegant Shopping Baskets, made by blind workers and filled with larder luxuries —one with each Runner-up Award value 10s. or over —also valuable 52-WEEK XWORD SEASON TICKET if Johnny-Basket won with entry value not less than 2s.

Up to 500 "SIGNPOST" PRIZES one for each 2nd Runner-up

Across Clues XWORD 753

5. May give you some idea as to way the wind's blowing
6. Literary man is unlikely to mind very much if you criticize his writing as this
8. Good this sometimes brings additional business to pub
9. A man's fanaticism is quite often attributable to his
12. The viola appeals to us by means of these
13. The way a man speaks to people shows whether he is this
14. If your side does this like cowards, you're beaten
15. One naturally thinks more of a boy who is this

Down Clues

1. Youngster cutting this is usually asking for trouble
2. This of war reduces a nation's powers of resistance
3. We think of one as rather apt to fly off the handle
4. Quite a lot of people feel it's rather heavy
7. Can be used for purchasing purposes
10. People who think they've a special mission in life are considered this by some
11. Gentle breeze shouldn't make lighter difficult to

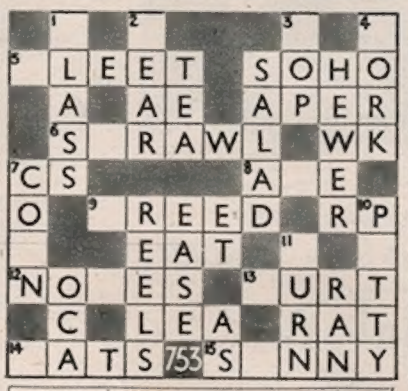
XWORD 748 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Stuff. 3, Pelf. 5, Fog. 7, Hide. 12, Poker. 13, Stick. 14, Mood. DOWN: 1, Styles. 2, Fouls. 4, Feet. 6, Duse. 8, Face. 9, Wrist. 10, Look. 11, Avid.

SEVEN £100 SHARERS: G. H. Bennett, Bradworthy, Devon; Mrs. D. Dowling, Bristol; R. A. Marsh, London, S.W.6; Mrs. K. Parsons, Cottingham, E. Yorks; Mrs. Smith, Wallasey, Cheshire; Mrs. Tofield, Ashford, Middx; Mrs. M. Wright, London, S.E.5.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 83 entrants. Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up.

£100 and "FOOD-PLUS" Prizes for this XWORD



CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

Puzzle and Form strictly copyright **753** Closing Postmark MON., SEPT. 24

I enclose P.O. value..... No.....

Signed.....

Address.....

.....

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated Oct. 6.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

EXAMPLE 6d.

BULLET

EX. 6d.

B.

EX. 6d.

B.

EX.

B. EXTRA TWO FOR 6d.

EX.

B

Closing Postmark **1,801** MON., SEPT. 24

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O. Value.....

No.....

Signed.....

Address.....

.....

FINAL GIANT BIRTHDAY OFFER—GET YOUR "BULLETIN"

With this coupon (which you can enclose with your entry) send P.O. 1s. for six weeks' *Bulletin* and *Gazette* at REDUCED SERIES RATE—first copy dated October 6. If requiring single copy only, affix 2½d. stamp below.

P.O. 1s. No.....

For Introductory copy of *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated October 6. **STICK 2½d. STAMP HERE**

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614

Depends On Stalin

title of the "Tiger of Cai-lay" for his energy in suppressing "Communism" in his administrative district.

Now, one finger cut off by the Viet-Minh and one child killed by them, he has brought peace and order to Saigon's streets. He has disrupted the Viet-Minh's terrorist organization, "cut off the head of the Dragon." But many people have been arrested and never seen or heard of again. . . .

No challenger to the power of President Tran Van Huu is permitted. When the Governor of North Viet-Nam, Dang-Huu Tri, by common consent an able and vigorous man, began to build up a political machine around him, His Excellency Nguyen Van Tam took an aeroplane, filled it with his police agents, and took off for Hanoi. A few days later, Northern Viet-Nam had a new governor—a quiet man—and a new set of administrators. It is not in these circumstances difficult to understand why the notion of a National Assembly is greeted with a certain scepticism.

What, then, of the future of this unhappy — strategically vital — country?

Said the Viet-Namese Prefect of Saigon in his office in the Hotel de Ville: "It doesn't depend on us any more. It depends on what happens in Europe and the Middle East and in Korea. It depends on what Mao Tse-tung tells Ho-Chi-Minh, and what orders Mao Tse-tung gets from Stalin in Moscow. . . ."

This, today, is also the almost universal view among the French, and it is very comforting because it does not require anybody to do anything.

Viet-Namese nationalists—which means practically everybody not actually in the Government—take an even more pessimistic line. Said a young Saigon office manager: "We nationalists are trapped—caught between the French, the Viet-Minh and the Chinese, and there is no way out. The French won't let us organize our own army to defend ourselves. So when they go we shall all be killed—or maybe they will come back from Australia and liberate us. All I'm thinking about now is getting out, with my wife and child, to Europe, to give my boy the chance of a decent education. . . ."

Fight Can Go On

Militarily, though de Lattre may succeed in breaking up the Viet-Minh's regular battalions and detaching a considerable slice of Viet-Minh's population, it is obvious that the hard core of do-or-die Communists could—and probably will—carry on guerrilla warfare for many years. But that would be very different from the present confused civil-colonial war.

For this at the bottom is a political ailment, a crisis of confidence. The people of this new-old land of Viet-Nam, energetic, intelligent, fiercely nationalistic, have it in their power, if they choose, to make a great contribution to the stability and wealth of South-East Asia.

Ho-Chi-Minh, "the One Who Shines," has come at last, perhaps, to the end of his long and extraordinary pilgrimage, but the enigmatic young man hunting tigers at Dalat, "the Guardian of Greatness"—and the only remaining symbol of national unity—could still, if he chose, keep his date with destiny.

Harry Hopkins, investigating Far East trouble spots for John Bull, is now in Malaya. His next series will be announced shortly

JACOB FISHES A FORTUNE —THE BACKBREAKING WAY

Continued from page 17

when you can fish for crawfish. Other times it's fishing with lines for snoek, or trekking for mullet. In one trek we've had as much as 40,000 lb. of fish."

A catch like this, say other Hout Bay fishermen, is exceptional. But Jacob has a reputation for being able to spot the big shoals. His experienced eye can see the splash of a fish a mile from the shore and sense whether it indicates a big haul.

Trekking is one of the oldest forms of fishing. When a shoal of fish is sighted, a boat puts out with the huge trek net. It is slowly unwound until it makes three sides of a rectangle of which the fourth side is the beach. As the fishermen haul the net in, the fish are trapped and brought ashore in a great pile.

Trekking Hazards

The rate of pay for trekked fish is 11s. 3d. a hundred. The company sells them for £1 a hundred. Trekking is not, therefore, as profitable as catching crawfish, and it involves long, unproductive hours watching for the comparatively rare shoals. Trekking is not without its hazards, either. Gus, Jacob's cousin, tells of the time when a shark was caught in the net. "He thrashed about, breaking the net, but never quite breaking through," says Gus. "When we finally landed him he took seven .303 bullets in his head before he died. He was 29 feet long, and we took him to Cape Town and showed him on the pier at 6d. a time. Made ourselves a few hundred pounds."

The fishermen who at present man South Africa's fleets have grown up in the industry—they and their fathers before them. They come from families who for generations have lived among the harbours and inlets of the Cape's rocky coast, building up a fishing tradition which promises to become a major industry—if it can find the men.

Capital, fish and markets are there. But the bulk of South Africa's population is native, to whom the sea is completely foreign; and although willing recruits can probably be found, there is still the problem of how to train them.

So it all comes back again to men like Jacob Trautman. Jacob has lived in Hout Bay all his life. He began fishing when he was seventeen. He learned his trade alongside his uncles and cousins. In a quarter of a century he has acquired a thousand skills. Where will South African fishing find more men like Jacob?

Invisible Menace

True, there is money to attract them, good money. But, as Jacob is so fond of insisting, it's money that doesn't come easily. Fishing round these coasts is no picnic. It is not only hard manual work that has roughened Jacob's hands. It is things like the poisonous bluebottles that come inboard with the fish and that are agony to touch. Invisible in the darkness, they will raise great weals on a man's legs that will lame him. Or there are the long, rough crawfish feelers, which have the same effect as handling thousands of files.

"Your hands get so sore," Jacob says, "that you have to sleep with the palms upwards on the pillow; you can't bear to have even the sheets touch them. Some mornings you can hardly fasten your belt. But while there are fish to be caught, you still have to go out." THE END

The family standby for STOMACH UPSETS

What a real friend of the family is 'Milk of Magnesia'*.

Grown-ups' indigestion . . . teen-age acidity . . . the youngster's tummy upsets—'Milk of Magnesia' dispels them all. Baby's 'windigestion' too, is soon put right.

But 'Milk of Magnesia' is more than a pleasant and effective antacid—it acts gently but surely as a laxative as well. A bottle kept handy in the Medicine Cabinet ensures ready relief whenever the need arises.

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Now they're gathering in the fruit . . .

You have stewed fruit and fruit pies for the table . . . in the larder, berries and cherries glow from their tall bottles . . . apples and pears are fresh from the trees . . . homemade jam is ready to enrich tarts and puddings during the months to come.

And beside the fruit stands the familiar jug of Bird's Custard. For, whenever fruit is served, the wise housewife serves Bird's Custard, too. She knows its delicate flavour . . . its creamy smo-o-thness . . . add so much to the taste of fruit. She knows that through the long years there has never been a custard even to rival Bird's.

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